





MEMORIES  
OF  
VILLIERSTOWN

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MEMORIES

OF

VILLIERSTOWN

BY

C. S. J.

LONDON

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1872



To the Memory of the वृद्ध सं.....  
\* विज्ञ. B. 84  
REV. PHILIP HONAN M.A.

Who departed this life on the 20th of Nov. 1846, aged 77 years

For a quarter of a century the officiating Minister

### VILLIERSTOWN CHAPEL

In point of human learning an accomplished scholar

In all spiritual teaching a bright luminary of the Church

A sure refuge to the poor in the time of trouble

Looked up to as an example to the rich

Revered by both classes

Meek, gentle, patient, single-minded

A Catholic Christian indeed without guile

This tablet has been erected by one of his most attached friends belonging to the flock which is now, by the inscrutable decree of an all-wise GOD, left to mourn over the loss of their beloved Pastor

*14th chapter of Revelation, part of the 13th verse*

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them



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MEMORIES  
OR  
VILLIERSTOWN.

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INTRODUCTION.

NE morning in September two travellers, warmly muffled up, were seen standing on the pier at Villierstown, waiting for the arrival of the steamer which plies between Cappoquin and Youghal. The mountains and hills were all wrapt in a thick morning mist ; but the rich woods and trees on each side of the flowing river, in spite of the clouds and mists, seemed to wish to clap their hands with joy. That pale lady, leaning on her husband's arm, had spent many years beneath an eastern sky, and knew that scene well. Her face was veiled ; but her eyes, filled with tears, gazed earnestly through clusters of trees to the roof of that home which 'heard her earliest cry.' Eagerly she looked at the fields, the old paternal fields,

which never can be forgotten, where she used to gather primroses, and weave daisy necklaces with loved brothers and sisters in the roseate sunshine hours of childhood ; then her gaze wandered to the grey towers of the church in which she was baptised, where she received her first Communion, and where the ashes of her beloved father rest till the resurrection morn. The old grey tower was unchanged, the lime trees yellowing in the autumn breeze with the rooks slowly wheeling around them wore the same appearance as when she had last seen them. But her thoughts were suddenly checked by a group of peasants gathering around them, and soon well-known voices exclaimed, 'Sure then 'tis Miss Charlotte, our own Miss Charlotte herself, and no mistake.' Yes, they remembered well their beloved pastor's eldest child, who had grown up amongst them, and who for years had seemed as one long dead. In her they saw again the pastor who had laboured faithfully amongst them for nearly a quarter of a century, who was ever a sure refuge to them in trial and sorrow, who had baptised most of them, and fed them with the bread of life. Oh ! what a meeting it was that morning as old men and women wrung the hand of her whom they had nursed as a baby, how they cried again for joy ! Middle-aged parents called their little ones around them, to see the child of one whose

memory was treasured deep in their hearts, and whose holy teachings had shed a hallowed radiance over their lives of toil and privation. Now on every side before the cottage doors small bonfires were kindled by the children in the simple joy of their hearts, others joined them from far and wide, and a jubilee, a regular jubilee, was in sweet Villierstown that day to welcome back their pastor's daughter. However, time and tide wait for no man; so the paddles of the steamer being heard, the travellers reluctantly had to hurry on board, and soon were borne over the glassy bosom of the Blackwater. As the steamer speeded on the mists slowly rose from the hills, and Charlotte pointed out to her husband the lovely range of the Knockmeiledown mountains; beautiful Dromana peeping out from its ancestral groves; Straneally Castle, the old mill of Koneen, and other spots once so familiar, but now looking like some half-forgotten dream of faded loveliness. On they sailed till they reached Youghal, a place once famous in history, and which was that day the abode of dear and revered friends—friends in the fullest acceptation of the word, for they were trusted, trusting, and true. That sweet autumn day they were a happy family group, but since then, the father of the family, who gave them such a hearty welcome, has been laid to rest. Other old and dear friends also met them, and as

evening came on Youghal receded from their sight. As they steamed back to Villierstown, they felt that it was a day ever to be remembered. On reaching the pier they found quite a crowd, ready and waiting to welcome them, and as in a long procession they walked up to the village every thing was well remembered by the pastor's daughter. There was the old school-house with its casement windows fringed with the crimson blossoms of the fuchsia and scented clematis, there was the clerk's tidy house nestling under the church-yard wall, the village green with the olea-tree in its centre ; the avenue of beech trees and—now the travellers reach the ancient gate of the much-loved church, and with bowed heads enter the hallowed spot. Oh, how solemn it looked in the dim twilight of the autumn evening ! Once those grey walls echoed , with the voice of praise and thanksgiving from a happy congregation, but all is still and silent *now*. From that pulpit once were uttered such teachings, such exhortation, and words of love and power as are seldom heard in this world.

At that altar, now veiled in darkness, there used to be so much light and glory that it seemed the very gate of heaven, and there, at the right side of the altar, the remains of that beloved pastor and teacher rest still. 'The longed-for trump shall awake the chorus from desert and field of the

blessed dead.' And life, joy and immortality shall come to light.

'Beneath the chancel's hallow'd stone,  
Exposed to every rustic tread,  
To few save humble mourners known,  
My father, is thy lowly bed,  
Few words upon thy white stone graven,  
Thy name, thy worth, thy death declare,  
Thy life on earth and hopes of heaven  
In simple plain recordance there,  
No scutcheons shine, no banners wave,  
In mockery o'er my father's grave.'

The two travellers left the church that evening with many tears of passing sadness mingled with holy anticipations of joy. Passing on as the shades of night were just closing in, they bade adieu to sweet Villierstown and their humble but much-loved friends, and entering a car were soon speeding on their way. Again and again they looked back, and, as a line of yellow light gilded the tops of the woods and trees, they were reminded of

'The Glory to be revealed.'

Years have now passed since that solemn autumn evening, and as Villierstown, sweet Villierstown, will ever be graven on the heart of the writer, she will go back some five-and-twenty long years, and, though with a feeble pen, try and recall her recollections of her father and the happy years when the now scattered family lived there and

'Call'd the Parsonage-house their home.'

The reminiscences are partly written by a dear sister who has also gone before, and that our united 'Memorial' to our much-loved father may be acceptable to his grand-children is my chief object and earnest wish! The time is short, and it may not be long now till we shall meet, an unbroken family, before the throne; and in the light of immortality acknowledge that, although weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning.

# CHAPTER I.



## CHAPTER I.

CHARACTER OF THE REV. PHILIP HOMAN, HIS EARLY LIFE AND ADVENTURES—FIRST MINISTRY AT VILLIERS-TOWN—BETTY MARKS.

OW wondrous is the transforming power of the love of Christ! It can change a poor sinful creature of clay from glory to glory, until he is able to reflect, as my loved father did, his Saviour's image in his walk and conversation. My father passed through life from childhood to youth, developing in that meekness which is strength, until he shone forth a bright luminary in the Church of Christ! To everyone it was apparent that the divine life was dwelling in him, and that the Holy Spirit was in his every word, look, and action. Suddenly was he called to join the company of the spirits of just men made perfect. We who continue in the flesh have lost in him a rare guide and teacher; *now* no more can we see his beaming countenance as he delivered to us his heavenly messages in tones as of rich music. He has been taken, perhaps in judgment, perhaps in love—on

earth we can see him no more.' I may well compare my father's character to that of the apostle St. John; for, like him, he seemed ever to dwell as if in his Saviour's presence, and to drink ever at the ineffable fount of life, love, and purity; for he was a man of a tender spirit and singularly pure heart. He knew that the blessing pronounced upon the pure in heart is, 'That they shall see God' (a blessing in the enjoyment of which I am confident he now rejoices). Ever ready to discern the presence of the Lord, and quick to perceive any tokens of His power, he looked beyond 'the outward thing, and beheld within the Lord and Master who alone orders and directs all change. He was ever ready to discern the Lord's hand in all the affairs of life. In trouble and sorrow he knew that it was the chastening of a kind and loving Father. Every blessing he enjoyed with an increased delight, feeling that all was the gift of his God.

In those events which worldly men regard as only ordinary chance occurrences, this highly-favoured disciple discerned the signs of his Lord's approach, and rejoiced in the sound of chariot-wheels. The blessed hope of seeing Him whom his soul loved was the chief hope of my father's life.

Whilst he dwelt here with us it seems now as if we knew not his value. *Once* we were able to gaze on his countenance radiant with love and purity, to

confide all our joys and griefs to his ready ear, and to hold sweet converse with him ; but he walked with God, and God took him, perhaps because we were not worthy of him.

Although years, long years have rolled by since that sad November morning when his loved remains were laid in the vault of Villierstown Church, his name has left an everlasting memorial deeply graven on our hearts. His guileless character, as portrayed in the following imperfect sketch of his short, but well-spent life, is but a poor tribute to his memory.

My father was the only child of Isaac Homan, a barrister in Dublin. His mother, Anne Cramer, was the eldest daughter of Dr. Cramer, of Sally Mount House, in the County Kildare, and Chancellor of Christ Church, Dublin, celebrated for deep piety and learning. Isaac Homan left his profession when about forty years of age, and, on account of heavy and unforeseen pecuniary difficulties, quitted the country and went to live in North America. I remember well when we were little children, and used to gather round the fire in the winter evenings, how our dear father used to amuse us by recounting his recollections of his early home in the strange pine forests in the wilds of Georgia. Oh ! how we used to delight in hearing of the garden where the castor-oil tree, the

cotton-tree, and the sugar-cane used to grow, where the maize and Indian corn waved as it were in seas; where the Réd Indians used to come laden with the spoils of the chase, and also of the curious log-house which sheltered them for many years, if not in luxury, yet in happiness and peace.

Brighter days seemed about to dawn for my grandfather, for he was summoned from this deep solitude to attend a council at Philadelphia, where an excellent appointment was to be conferred on him. Whilst at the council, however, he was exposed to a draught from an open window, came home, complaining of headache and shivering. Low fever set in, and in a few days he died, leaving his poor wife and his little son Philip strangers in a still stranger land. Although my father's recollections of this loved parent were but distant and dim they were still very sweet, his character being one of the greatest simplicity, gentleness, and love.

My grandmother had been early instructed in the way of truth by her good father Dr. Cramer. Amid all the chances and changes of life, with undeviating faith she looked up to God as a loving Father, and one able to sympathise in all her griefs and trials.

In this dark hour of loneliness and widowhood, she meekly bowed her head, and secure in her trust, she bade adieu to the pine-forest where

she had spent so many peaceful days ; and with her only son made her way to the nearest seaport town, and there set sail for old England.

Travelling was very different in those days to what it is *now*. Steamers were not even thought of, railways were unknown ; so it was a formidable undertaking in the depth of winter for a lady, tenderly and delicately brought up, to venture across the wild Atlantic in a rough sailing ship and with a helpless child. The only recollection my father had of their departure from America was seeing his mother sewing a quantity of gold coins inside her dress. This precaution was not taken in vain, for they were not long at sea before they were overtaken by a violent storm, and shipwreck came upon them in all its horrors. Many of the people on board perished, but the widow and child, doubtless guarded by angel hands, escaped on a raft with a few sailors, and reaching a lonely rocky island, were welcomed by an old hermit of the name of Jerry Leeds.

I remember well when we were children how we used to climb on our father's knee as he sat by the blazing winter fire, and how we used to delight in making him describe this wild island to us and Jerry Leeds. Jerry was a man of great stature, and although a European by birth was almost a savage in many of his habits ; he was, however,

kind and hospitable, and tried in his own rough way to make them comfortable. He made up some beds of wild beasts' skins, and fed them with fish and birds, which latter he daily shot for them and brought home in a huge kind of barrow.

Even in this desolate spot my grandmother ever realised that God was her father and her friend, and in this simple trust her courage *never* failed. She continued bright as a sunbeam, although the snow lay deep around their rude dwelling, and the wild spray from the ocean dashed over the humble roof, and the bitterly cold wind howled through their lonely dwelling.

Yes! in the midst of it all she never felt forsaken; the true believer can never feel alone. Wherever placed, whatever may be our outward circumstances, we must feel a joy which cannot pass away in thinking of a Saviour's love. My grandmother felt that the Holy Spirit's peace and joy were with her, and God's unfailing arm was her sure though unseen support. She experienced the truth of the words—

‘Who hath the Father and the Son  
May be left, but not *alone*.’

However, the time of trial came to an end. Winter passed away, and the balmy breath of spring came to cheer even this desolate island; tiny wild flowers peeped from among the crevices

of the rocks, the singing of birds was heard in the land, and sunshine streamed even into Jerry Leeds' rough dwelling. One spring day, as they all sat watching the bright rays of sunshine dancing on the dark blue waves, to their intense joy they descried a sail—a white sail. With shouts of joy and welcome they made haste and hoisted signals; and as it drew nearer to them, to their unbounded rapture it proved to be a ship bound for England. At length release had come for the poor captives in this desolate spot, and bidding adieu to old Jerry Leeds, who proved himself a true, thorough friend in need, they all joyfully went on board, and after a successful voyage, to the delight of their family and friends, landed safe once more in old Ireland.

My grandmother took a house in Dublin, and her widowed mother Mrs. Cramer and her grandmother Mrs. Taylor both came to live with her. After a little time, her dear son Philip, the subject of this memoir, was sent to a public school at Drogheda. At this school he was very unhappy. Not being accustomed to the society of boys, he often described to us how in play-hours he used to sit on his little box thinking of his dear mother and of home.

At the age of sixteen he entered Trinity College, Dublin, where he was much distinguished by his talent and delight in study. Before taking priest's

orders he made a pleasant tour on the Continent, where his elegant tastes found a field for expansion and development in the free study of nature and art. Sir William Homan, a cousin of his father's, acted the part of kinsman ; so when he had taken priest's orders, he presented him with the chaplaincy of Villierstown. In those days it was a very lonely spot ; the patron and lord of the soil —Lord Stuart de Decies—was a minor, and at school in England, so the stately halls of beautiful Dromana were shut up ; no steamer plied on the picturesque Blackwater, and no traveller came near the sweet secluded valley.

Surrounded by mountains and hills in the centre of this valley, sweet Villierstown lay actually cradled in loveliness ; never was there a spot more favoured by nature, for in the winter even the laurustinus, laurels, and evergreen oaks grew in rich luxuriance. In the month of May the blossoms on the hawthorns and fruit-trees were as white as snow, the tender green of the old beech-trees in the lanes seemed to dance with youthful joy, the ground was carpeted with such primroses, cowslips, and violets as I have never seen anywhere else, and at sunset the air resounded with the soft notes of the cuckoo and the sweet songs of birds. But, alas ! though lovely, *most* lovely as was Villierstown in exteriors, though every pro-

spect pleased the eye, the inhabitants of this village, when my father came there, were like the land of Zabulon beyond Jordan, 'a people dwelling in darkness and in the shadow of death.' They knew not God, His commandments were violated and His ways set at nought. This lovely spot was indeed full of the impurities of evil-speaking, lying, and slandering.

Hopeless, or almost hopeless, seemed the task before the young minister, but being taught of God and aided by His Spirit, he, like the apostle, ceased not to 'warn them with tears night and day.' Patiently he went on seeking after the most profligate, trying to show that even to such as they were, a fountain was opened in which they might wash away their stains ; he tried with difficulty to have the shops closed on the Lord's day, to make children obedient, wives keepers at home, and to introduce peace and love where only hatred, lying, and variance were chiefly heard. It was, indeed, weary work. He was, however, much upheld, cheered, and strengthened in the midst of it all by the society of two dear and valued friends, the Rev. William Power, of Affane, and his wife. They were well read in the Scriptures, and rejoiced with joy unspeakable in the finished work of Christ their Saviour ; so in all the unbelief, coldness, and deadness around, a day at Affane always sent the young

minister back to his work refreshed and comforted. On he laboured, though, alas ! too often 'bowed to earth with thankless toil' and light esteem.'

After some time, however, a few bright rays began to illumine the darkness, and here I shall just mention one instance of conversion, as it may illustrate the difficulty of my father's task, and how it was accomplished.

In Villierstown there lived an unhappy woman of the name of 'Betty Marks,' but she was so sunk in vice that even her own family refused to hold any intercourse with her, and she was so depraved that her conscience seemed seared as by a hot iron.

The poor creature in despair left her native village, and after a while was entirely forgotten ; but although thought no more of by relation or friend she was remembered by a loving Father whose heart yearns after His erring children—yes, even when they are a long way off—and in all her guilt and misery the Lord loved this poor sinner. In a vision—a dream of the night—an arrow pierced her hard heart. She dreamt, and lo ! she was once again in her native village. Once again she heard the almost forgotten sound of the 'church-bells of her home,' and as in bygone days she went up to the house of God in company ; again she knelt in her accustomed place, which now, alas ! knew her

no more. When looking up, she saw a minister clothed in white, standing at the communion rails and beckoning to her. As she rose and approached him, he offered her some bread ; she touched it, and it became gold in her hands. She ate it, and her poor, weary, fainting, hungry soul was satisfied. The mysterious food, instead of diminishing as she ate, increased, so that it filled both her hands. She held out her apron, and it too was filled with the rich treasure.

Then the poor, weary, heavy-laden one, yearning for sweet Villierstown, crept back there ; but no welcome awaited her, all her relations loathed the very sight of her poor, pale, exhausted face and wasted form ; so she was obliged to take up her abode in a miserable cottage, little better than a hovel, for the floor was covered with pools of water, and the rain and wind beat in through the miserably thatched roof ; and in this wretched shelter, she felt that she had only come to die.

A sure but slow disease of the lungs had taken fast hold on her. Sunday after Sunday she found her way to the old church, where her dream was verified by hearing from her pastor's lips 'glad tidings of great joy.' There she was fed with the bread of life which came down from heaven, and which became to her weary soul more precious than gold, yea, than much fine gold.

There the tidings of a Saviour's dying love subdued and melted her hard heart by its all-constraining power. She knew the hatefulness of sin, and looking to the cross as the children of Israel did to the brazen serpent in the wilderness she was saved. Like Mary Magdalene she loved much, and feeling like her that much was forgiven, she longed to pour her life and soul and all at her precious Saviour's feet.

Soon her whole conduct changed. Old things passed away, and all became new. She bore the insults of her friends and relations with such meekness and patience that even they were constrained to acknowledge that she had been with Jesus. Her naturally violent temper became lamblike, gentle and forgiving; and instead of impure conversation, she was frequently heard singing psalms and hymns. Her miserable abode resounded with songs of joy; but as her spiritual life quickened, her poor frail tenement of clay slowly but as surely crumbled away. A bad cough accompanied with violent spitting of blood obliged her to discontinue her attendance at the house of God, but her pastor daily visited her, and never did he return from her poor abode without saying, 'It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'

The time of poor Betty's dissolution drew on,

but instead of fear she hailed with joy the signs of her earthly house being broken up. While her pastor used to sit by her dying bed, her face often lit up, as she used to say, 'Dear, dear pastor, although I am going before you to glory, I will not forget *you* there. No! I shall long for the day when I shall see you coming through the gates to the city; and then if I'll not run out and welcome you! Oh, *what* a welcome I will have for him who brought me to Jesus!'

One evening very late, a messenger came to the parsonage to say that poor Betty was dying, and wished much to see her much-loved pastor ere she embarked on her long voyage. As usual he hastened to her bed, and true enough Death was fast setting his seal on her worn features. All were weeping; but Betty's eye was clear and bright, and not a trace of fear was on her countenance. When she saw my father, she said that she wanted to pray; so they propped her up with pillows, and in a clear yet thrilling voice she uttered, as well as I can remember, the following prayer:—

'O almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I come to praise and bless Thee for all Thy great mercy and love to me, a poor, sinful, wretched worm of the dust. I was in darkness and the shadow of death, and Thou didst seek me and find me. Jesus, the good Shepherd, sought me, and

found me, and brought me on His shoulders rejoicing ! He washed away all my sins in His own most precious blood. He clothed me in the best robe. He embraced me in the arms of His love, and He fed me with the hidden manna, and gave me the white stone, with the new name written thereon, which no man knew save me and my God. And now the time of my departure is at hand, and O my God ! I come to Thee, and it is without fear, for Thy name is Love. Without fear I am about to plunge into the dark river ; for I shall soon, soon enter in through the gates into the City, where the shining ones are ready to welcome me ! Oh ! the song of the harpers harping on their harps. Glory to Thee, O blessed Jesus, sweet Saviour, for Thy mighty love, Thy wondrous love : I know it *now*. Halleluia ! Glory ! Praise ! Halleluia ! to God and the Lamb !'

Shortly after she quietly fell asleep, leaving all around astonished at the work of Him who brought back this poor erring one to His fold ; raising her from the depths of misery, and leading her back to cool shades and the refreshing waters of His love.

## CHAPTER II.



## CHAPTER II.

THE CAMERON FAMILY—LISMORE—FIRST SUNDAY AT VILLIERSTOWN—MARRIAGE—BIRTH OF THE FIRSTBORN—CHARLOTTE'S BIRTHDAY.

Y father's marriage took place in 1828, and well suited in every way for the duties of the pastor's wife was the partner who fell to his lot. My mother was the eldest daughter of Colonel Cameron of the 9th Regiment of Foot, who served under the Duke of Wellington, and was present in the battles of the Peninsular War, Vittoria, St. Sebastian, etc. At the storming of Badajos my grandfather was severely wounded in the head, but he missed Waterloo, being in America when that crowning victory was won. Colonel Cameron married early in life Eliza, daughter of the Rev. Dr. Lovett, descended from a very ancient family in Buckinghamshire.

He had three sons, who all died early, and three daughters, Eliza, Frances, and Melisina, who survived him. His eldest son Jonathan was sent to

India when quite a lad, and after gaining distinction at the college in Calcutta when the Marquis Wellesley was Governor General, he was appointed ambassador to Persia. While serving at the Persian Court he was seized with rheumatic fever, and obtaining leave to return home he set out round the Cape of Good Hope, but died at sea, leaving all his property to his sister Eliza, my grandmother. In 1824, Colonel Cameron, my grandfather, retired from His Majesty's service, and went to live with his wife in Lismore, an ancient cathedral town about five or six miles distant from Villierstown. Their house, an old family mansion, was built close to the cathedral by Dean Gervaise, Mrs. Lovett's father, when he fled from France on account of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

This old house can no more be seen, having been pulled down many years ago ; but I remember it well :—

‘ Somewhat back from the village street  
Stood the old-fashion'd country seat.  
Across its ancient portico  
Tall elm trees their shadows throw.’

I remember long winding passages, long, low, old-fashioned rooms with quaint furniture and ancient family portraits ; but more distinctly than all I remember the lovely garden which we entered by

a glass door. There were terraces above terraces of the softest green grass, curious old summer-houses and alcoves, and oh ! such a rich profusion of lilies, larkspur, and geraniums, and there flourished as I have never seen since, the lovely rose of Provence, which, like the Gervaise family, had been transplanted from France to the old cathedral town in Ireland. Colonel Cameron's family consisted of four sons and two daughters ; the eldest son, Jonathan Lovett, is now the revered and much-beloved rector of Sevenoaks in Kent ; two others, Henry and Charles, died early in Australia ; and William Lochiel, after serving for twenty-four years in India as a surgeon, died at the age of forty-eight, deeply and deservedly regretted by all who knew him. Colonel Cameron's eldest daughter, Maria, was our dear mother ; and the other, Helena, married Mr. Lace of Liverpool.

Colonel Cameron was much distinguished for his amiable character, and also for his personal appearance, and I have often heard that he was considered one of the handsomest men in the British army ! Living quietly in the old house at Lismore, one sweet autumn Sunday morning, as they were all seated at breakfast, one of the happy party proposed that instead of going to service as usual at the cathedral that morning, they should drive over to Villierstown Church, and hear young

Mr. Homan preach. The rumours of his teaching had begun even then to spread over the country. The proposal was received with joy, and soon the family's Irish jaunting car, and the Colonel's gig and favourite horse, drove up to the door. My mother has often indeed described that day to me as one of the red-letter days of her life; for it was one of those days which never die. She said as she sat beside her dear father in the gig, and they drove through the exquisitely lovely scenery between Lismore and Villierstown, that she felt as if she could hug the world to her heart. It was a fresh beautiful morning, and the woods of Dromana, through which they passed, were still clad in the livery of summer, with just a yellow leaf here and there; the heather was in all its beauty, and the silver mists slowly dispersed from the purple Knockmeiledown mountains as they drove along.

In the cathedral at Lismore they had been used to hearing the service chanted carelessly with no attempt at devotion; the sermons were cold, formal, and heartless, and as they were delivered, the congregation either nodded in their pews or criticised their neighbours; so it was a great change coming into the simple, quiet country church at Villiers-town, where the calm, solemn voice of the young clergyman expressed that he felt that he was indeed in the presence of the unseen Jehovah, and

that the church was 'none other but the house of God and the gate of heaven.'

The text that morning was, 'And they did all eat of the same spiritual meat, and did all drink of the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that Rock which followed them, and that Rock was Christ.' The words were simple, but they were earnest words, sincere words, and accompanied by the unction of the Holy One they brought the hearers under the shadow of the Rock of Ages, and the Cameron family returned to Lismore solemnized and blest. Soon after this Sunday, my parents were introduced to each other by a mutual friend, and ere many months were passed by they were engaged, and on November 16, 1828, they were married in the cathedral at Lismore. Then followed many years of the greatest happiness to the young couple, for their happiness consisted in labouring hand in hand in their Master's vineyard, and in studying the Scriptures together for hours every day.

Time passed on, and my mother often described her happiness when the hope of welcoming a little baby brightened up the parsonage house; and oh! what hours of intense happiness she had in preparing the little wardrobe! hour quickly followed hour as she sat in the little study with her husband reading out to her whilst her clever fingers made

the tiny frocks, the cobweb-looking caps, and the gay-coloured boots. That study will ever be remembered by us all. Even now in fancy I see its large windows opening on the grass plot surrounded by cool shady trees, then the well-filled bookshelves, the telescope, microscope, electrifying machine, and other curiosities, and almost at all seasons of the year a bright fire sparkled in the grate, adding to the cheerfulness of the room. Never was a child born into a sweeter or happier home than was the eldest daughter into Villierstown parsonage, and the rapture of embracing the first child and hearing its first cry is a joy which parents only know, and which surely has less of earth than heaven in its intenseness.

Years rolled on, and one by one other little rosy faces appeared at the parsonage, little feet were heard patterning about, and merry voices and sweet laughter re-echoed in the rooms. Six bright, healthy children gladdened the quiet place; Charlotte, Annie, Philip, Eliza, Fanny, and Cramer; two of them have gone before and joined their father, but those who are left will preserve as long as they live a most grateful remembrance of their sweet, happy, sheltered childhood, and those days of unbroken sunshine which are now mingled with the past. Now, one by one, I will go over some of those days, those happy days, and 'summon from the shadowy past the forms which once have been.'

Birthdays were always affectionately remembered and joyously kept at the parsonage, and even now the scattered family try to remember them, for sweet is the memory of 'banished hours.' The following sketch is by a dear sister of the birthday of the eldest child.

### CHARLOTTE'S BIRTHDAY.

It was the 25th of January, and a bright, wintry day! the happy valley was clothed in a mantle of snow on which the sun shone cheerily, the sky was unclouded, and the chill north wind was still, as winter in its brightest garb appeared:

At the parsonage house, at an early hour in the morning, the little household had arisen with various joyful exclamations and expectations, for the day was a festive one!

In the study, with its well-lined bookshelves and blazing fire, we might see the father and faithful pastor at his morning prayers to his Maker; and as he earnestly prays, his prayers are doubtless ascending for his child, who on this day was born.

Her holy father does not pray for earthly honours or earthly prosperity for his child, but he prays that, on entering the new year of her life, she may be kept from the world, and that to her may yet be given the crown of life.

Dearly beloved is this child whose birthday was on the 25th of January, St. Paul's day. At nine o'clock the prayer-bell rings, and into the study troop the children and servants. Prayers over, Charlotte is embraced and blessed by her happy parents, for it is her birthday! the birthday of their firstborn. That dear, kind father is smiling pleasantly, as he knows that there is a present waiting for his pet on the breakfast table; it is some valuable, well-selected book; he has had it locked and laid by for some time, and rejoices in the thought of the pleasure it will give his child, and pleasure it truly does give, as her bright, happy face bears witness. Then each little brother and sister present their little gifts; though trifling in value they are given with love, and received with joy and intense happiness. It is a festive occasion in the parsonage house; the lessons are all put aside for the day, and the children are literally wild with delight because it is Charlotte's birthday. Though a princess might have her birthday kept with more pomp, she could not have it kept with more gladness. At twelve o'clock there is service in the old church, and the beautiful service for St. Paul's day is read, and, leaving the church gates, the poor people gather round Miss Charlotte and wish her 'many happy returns of the day,' for she has grown up among them, and they feel as if

she were their own child. After the humble friends go home to their cottages, other friends arrive from different country houses, and bring their children to have a play at Villierstown.

The drawing-room is soon filled with happy, merry little boys and girls; they dance round the table and admire all the pretty things laid out for the birthday. All the little gifts the children have ever received are spread out to make the room look '*grand* ;' so mama's useful work-basket and books are stowed away, and the children's treasures are all displayed for admiration. There is Charlotte's rosewood work-box opened out, displaying its yellow satin lining, there is Annie's London doll with its wonderful waxen legs and arms and green muslin dress, there is Fanny's brown mouse, and Daisy's cups and saucers, and a very delightful glass box with painted figures on it. Ah me! I see them all with my mind's eye, but where are the treasures now? and how far separated and far away is the little sisterhood that joined to arrange all that innocent grandeur! After a feast of a dinner the young friends drive home, and the family group assemble in the dining-room. What a warm comfortable room that old parlour was, with its crimson curtains closely drawn, its wavy red paper on the walls, its shiny mahogany side-board and tables, then its blazing fire and the

bright brass fender and bars, whilst over the black marble chimney-piece was a plaster cast of 'The Last Supper,' done by a village tradesman of promising talent, but who years ago entered his rest though 'his sun was yet at noon !'

The hissing urn is brought in, and the children are sitting round with their bread and butter, and talking, laughter, and merriment of all kinds go on. I think I see them all now, even to the little sea-weedy pattern of the china cups and big piles of loaves, and the freshly-made prints of yellow butter.

Now Sowther, the man-servant, has taken away the things, and dear papa gets into his accustomed chair between the fire and the little cherry-wood table where is placed his own candle. At the other side of the little table is dear mother in her own arm-chair, called 'Sleepy Hollow' it is so snug. She is plying her needle in her own clever way, and with unequalled industry is showing the beauty of that talent which shines brightest when common things are being executed in a masterly manner.

Then round the large table are grouped the children of the house; there is the happy Charlotte, the pleasant child, 'the pet.' She is seated as happy as a queen before her large desk, and is busy copying 'Jullienne's heads;' near her is the

'Hebe,' as dear father calls his second daughter, for every evening at nine o'clock she has the exclusive privilege of bringing her beloved father a glass of water. Then there are the young children, one whose pet name is '*Mutton Chops*,' another 'Lady Daisy ;' they are trying to be very clever, and to make some wonderful patchwork quilts.

Sitting opposite the fire is 'Duke,' the eldest son, the noble Philip ; he is called 'Duke' as a pet name, and is indeed noble in talent and mind. Look at his broad, open forehead, bright, sparkling eyes, and expressive countenance. Who could look at him and not see the brightest promise of a brilliant career and distinguished path through life? But no earthly greatness was he destined to see, or worldly honours to receive ; God called him as a youth from a world that might have been too ensnaring for a creature of such brilliant promise.

The youngest of the family is Cramer, the 'Little Tim,' a dear, good child ; he is upstairs in his little crib, and doubtless his guardian angel is smiling as it watches the innocent slumbers of the little one. Now papa tells everyone to have their talk and their 'say out,' for when once he commences to read aloud no interruptions are allowed. Then that melodious, kind voice reads out from Charlotte's new birthday book, and all listen to that

delightful history or interesting book of travel. At ten o'clock the evening prayers are read, and soon after the family have all gone up 'to roost,' and the happy joyous birthday has gone by for another year.

## CHAPTER III.



## CHAPTER III.

DESCRIPTION OF DROMANA—TALES AND TRADITIONS—A DAY AT DRUMROO—A MAY DAY IN THE CAMPHIRE WOODS.

 *T* is a great comfort during the long pilgrimage of life to be able to look back upon the sweet days of childhood and youth with feelings of unmixed pleasure.

Sadly, but exquisitely, the poet sings

*A sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things.*

However, I do not agree with his pensive song, for I always think that the days we once spent at Villierstown are really like

*A sheltering rock in memory's waste,  
O'ershadowing all the weary land.*

In sickness, loneliness, and banishment, those days always come back to us with a light and glory which nothing can destroy.

In the dreary deserts of Lind, on the black burnt-cinder-like rocks of Aden, the very name of Villierstown makes the desert blossom as the rose, and in fancy one can see again the shady trees, the brimming river, the blue mountains, and all the sunny places where

*In days long past we strayed together.*

Villierstown is a singularly picturesque village, and was originally built by one of the Lords Grandison for a settlement of linen weavers who came from the north of Ireland ; but we will not linger there this bright summer day, my readers, for I want you to wander with me past the old green lane shadowed over by beech trees, and then through sunny fields commonly known by the name of the 'spring well fields,' till we approach the ancient and beautiful house of Dromana. Most romantically is it situated on a steep rock overhanging the Blackwater, like one of the far-famed castles of the Rhine, and its balconied windows shaded by fine stately trees. On one side of the house is a curious hanging garden built as a kind of miniature of the hanging gardens of Babylon ; there are terraces above terraces of the softest green grass, which terminate in a bastion and old boat-house.

Then among the rocks and ferns close to the river is a curious well called 'The Lady's Well,' and said to be haunted. Indeed the villagers often declare that unearthly beings are seen about these lonely spots after dark. I cannot vouch for the truth of their stories, but on every side there are places rife with traditions and tales of mystery and blood.

I remember an old tree denuded of all its branches, on which one of the Lords of Dromana,

the Brigadier Villiers, was said to have hanged two sons of a poor Villierstown widow, and when he led her to the place and showed her their lifeless bodies, tradition says that she knelt down and cursed him. A little farther on from this tree is a dark, dreary pond, where they say that the young heir of the house was drowned whilst fishing one bright spring morning in consequence of the widow's curse ; then comes a long avenue down which the same Brigadier's carriage and four is said to be distinctly heard driving at full speed whenever there is a death in the family either at home or abroad !

The entrance hall of Dromana is worthy of a royal abode from its great dimensions, massive pillars, and wide branching staircase. I have gazed for hours at the old family portraits which line the walls, and listened with childish eagerness to the story attached to each picture.

The wicked but handsome Brigadier Villiers in his coat of armour, with his little blue-eyed page by his side, who was bled to death by his cruel hands ; good old Earl John, who built and endowed the church at Villierstown ; Earl George, who gambled away much of the family property and estates ; the lovely Lady Gertrude Villiers, painted by Angelica Kaufmann, looking the beau idéal of beauty and happiness, but who died of a broken heart for

the husband of her youth. Then, Lord Hunsdon in his grand dress in which he used to figure at the court of good Queen Bess, ruff, sword, and all complete ; and close by Lord Hunsdon hangs the portrait of a fair young girl whose name is forgotten, who was starved to death, but is now smiling from the wall in her rose-coloured brocade dress, lace cap and apron.

There is a story or tradition connected with almost every room in Dromana House, from the days of the old Earls of Desmond ; there is one room in particular in which there is a mysterious passage leading down to the river, and about which sad tales are whispered. But there is nothing gloomy about the beautiful drawing-room which we always called 'The Golden Drawing-room,' on account of its gilt paper and magnificent chandelier, and where there was always the kindest of welcomes from its noble owners for us all.

We loved every nook and corner of beautiful Dromana, and never can any place on earth seem to rival the 'Cowslip field' near the 'Bounds Gate,' where we used to spend many a long, bright day trying to make cowslip balls under the shade of the chesnut trees ; then the pretty garden called the 'pheasantry,' on account of a valuable collection of these beautiful birds, who were there enclosed in an aviary, and used to delight us with their gold and

silver wings. There was a cottage in this pheasantry inhabited by an old woman of the name of 'Cauliflower,' who was our especial friend, when we used to take refuge from a shower of rain by her snug wood fire and listen with delight and wonder to her tales of other days.

In addition to our kind friends at Dromana we had many others in the neighbourhood with whom we used to spend many happy days, and so I will try and recal some of them, for they were indeed days of sunshine.

#### A DAY AT DRUMROO.

IT was a day in early spring, and Sir William Homan sent his 'break' or wagonette to convey the whole of the family of the parsonage to the house of Drumroo.

Long, long ago saw that merry family party seated in the roomy vehicle this pleasant spring day. There were the joyful happy father and mother with their rosy daughters, and the merriest of merry boys.

As they drove along over the grassy downs of lovely Dromana, and saw the sheep and lambs and also the budding trees and fresh green grass all starred with primroses, everything seemed not only the springtide of the year, but also the springtide of

youth, hope and joy to these happy children. No fervid summer sun had as yet scorched a single leaf, or withered the slenderest blade of grass in the forests or on the plains, for the year was yet in its infancy. Yes! 'twas all joy *then*. No sorrow had dimmed their sky, no storms, no grief, no wintry winds had come to chill their happy hearts, and they laughed and drove on; they laughed and chatted, never imagining but that all of life was spring for ever.

They arrive at the strange house of Drumroo, but it is yet in an unfinished state. They are welcomed by the old Baronet, who seems that day as pleased as the happy children themselves; then off they all go to the Swiss Cottage which Sir William Homan had built on his grounds in exact imitation of an Alpine châlet. Oh, how enchanting it looked to the children! no ducal drawing-room could have been half so enchanting to their eyes. How they raced from one room to another, expressing their admiration at the pine-wood furniture, the delightful cabinet of curious china, the charming kitchen with its great projecting chimney-piece, and gallery all round reached only by a ladder, and which the children quickly mounted!

They all declared that they would go and live in a Swiss cottage, and never have any other kind of house.

So bright Charlotte said that she must have one, also gentle Annie, dear joyous Philip, Datsy, and Fanny.

Sir William, delighted with their enthusiasm, promised the children that he would give them all a pigeon pie in the Swiss Cottage for dinner, and also a gooseberry tart, if they would come to his garden and gather the young green gooseberries.

The party were soon seen in the bushes gathering away, talking and laughing whilst the spring air fanned them with the scent of the sweet violets and primroses, and feathery larches tossing their green tassels wasted their gum-like perfume.

The birds sang merrily from tree to tree, but the group that gathered the gooseberries that day were gayer and blither far than any songster of the woods.

Long years, long years have passed away, and many springs have visited that spot, opening the primrose buds, and exhaling the gum from the larch trees, and making the birds sing from every bush ; but never again can that merry party meet in that garden, and never as long as earth remains can they all reassemble there.

Some of the group are still travelling in the pilgrimage of life ; far, far apart their different routes all laid ; but oh, what matter ! so all meet in the same Land of Promise. More than half of their number

have crossed the flood and entered into rest. The kind old Baronet, the loved, revered father, and also two of the fairest and most promising of the little ones.

That was a happy day, and a gala day at old Drumroo, and in after years the children never wearied of talking of its delights.

When the dinner was over in the delightful Swiss Cottage, Sir William said that he had a treat for the children, as they had been so good all day, and the treat was that they were to accompany him to his farm-yard, and see all his dogs, cows, horses, sheep, pigs and fowl.

The little ones screamed and jumped for joy, and thought that nothing could possibly be more enchanting than such a sight ; so soon they were in the farm-yard, where they saw the most extraordinary Chinese cows and tumbling pigeons, Russian rabbits, black pigs, grand cocks and hens ; in short, wonderful birds and beasts of all kinds.

‘ Well, children ! ’ said Sir William, ‘ do you like all these creatures ? ’

‘ Yes indeed we do,’ a merry chorus of voices replied.

‘ Well,’ he answered, ‘ every one of you may each choose whatever beast or bird you like best, and take it home with you to Villierstown.’

Great was the joy created by this offer. Charlotte

as eldest had first choice ; so she chose a white lamb. 'Very well (said Sir William to his faithful servant Peter), put up that lamb in a cart and send it to Villierstown for Miss Charlotte.' Then gentle Annie chose a beautiful speckled black and white hen. 'That is a very thrifty little girl,' remarked Sir William, and Annie's pet too was carried off. Then bright, beautiful Philip's face lighted up as he declared that a Russian rabbit with long black hair was the wish of his heart ; so that dear child's pet was also packed in a box, and put into the cart to his unbounded joy. Daisy's turn came next, and to the amusement of all she chose a grand showy-looking cock, which she thought was much the handsomest of all the pets.

Fanny's turn came last, and she said that nearly everything was chosen by her sisters and brothers, but there were some very nice black pigs still left, and that she would dearly like to have one of them. There was a great laugh against poor dear 'Fan the fair' for her choice, but Sir William said, 'Never mind, "Mutton Chops" (which was a pet name he had for the rosy little Fanny), you will be the best housekeeper of them all, and you have chosen the most useful and profitable animal, thereby showing your good sense.' Then taking leave of their kind host they were all soon seated in the wagonette, and after a delicious drive, as the dews of

spring were falling, reached the Parsonage House at Villierstown, all declaring that the day at Drumroo was indeed a red-letter day in their young lives!

Many were the beautiful country places on the banks of the Blackwater, and many were the true, hospitable friends living in them who ever had a loving welcome for us all.

Oh ! the homes of long ago !

The warm true friends of long ago,

The undoubting eyes, the kindling hopes, of long ago,

The liberal friends of long ago !

I could fill volumes in describing our walks over the breezy hill of Ballingown to the hospitable house of Woodstock, and all the curiosities which used to delight us there ; then sweet, peaceful Rockfield, with its shady trees, exquisite gardens, and river walk, and the true, loving friends there who were ever unchanging and unchanged. Affane, Belleville Park, the sweet Archdeaconry at Lismore, etc. Years have changed all these loved spots, and other inhabitants are now dwelling there ; so that if we now should exclaim with the Eastern poet, ' Friends of my youth, where are ye ? ' the lone echo would answer ' Where '—all have gone—all is changed. However, I will now describe a day in the month of May in the Camphire Woods, spent with some of the dearest of our childhood's friends.

## A MAY DAY IN THE CAMPHIRE WOODS.

IT was a glorious morning in May, the very bridal of earth and sky ; all nature rejoicing in the bright sun and genial atmosphere. Never did the sun shine brighter than at Villierstown, and in no part of the earth did spring appear in a fairer robe.

Look into the Parsonage House this pleasant morning. See ! the happy family are seated at breakfast, the wide sash window is open, letting in the perfumed breeze. From this window you see the little grass garden, and it is brilliant and gay with thick clumps of polyanthus, hepaticas, and jonquils. The anemones all one by one have opened their cups, and are now adorning the earth with their various colours of red, white, and ultramarine blue, the ground seems like a piece of mosaic from this wealth of colour ; the tall shrubs in the background are clothed with blossoms of the lovely lilac, whilst the laburnum boughs are bending down to the fresh springing grass, and their long bunches of yellow flowers look like golden hair from a mermaid's head, and floating on a bright green sea beneath.

As the happy group of children are seated at their morning meal, each little one in turn is repeating what verse in the Psalm that has been read at family prayers has struck them most that morning, and the coffee is poured out by dear mother, and the huge loaf is willingly cut up by the loving father's hand, and spread with the fresh yellow butter. As the meal proceeds a ring is heard at the hall door. 'Who can that be at this hour of the morning?' all exclaim; 'surely all the beggars have been relieved, and the tickets for the dispensary have been given out, but who comes to breakfast?' The children spring up from the table, run out, and rush in as speedily, dancing with joy and saying, 'A note from Lady Musgrave.' Yes, a note from that kind friend always and invariably brought with it joy and delight, for she was deservedly called 'The Children's Friend.' Mamma now reads out a loving invitation that all of her little ones may go and spend the day at Tourin Castle; and to their delight tells them that the boat will be waiting on the river under the old garden wall of Dromana. Consent was cheerfully given, and the children were to go. Never were children happier, for to go to such a delightful place as Tourin Castle was a rare treat. See! what a lovely walk they all have before they reach the river! they ramble through a nobleman's

splendid demesne, they pass through his lordly woods, and as they go along every sight is pleasant to the eye, every sound is joy to the ear, and every scent is sweet ; nature animate and inanimate is rejoicing in the beauteous advent of May. It seems as if all the earth was robed with flowers to greet the glad bridal of 'Merrie May ;' the grass, the wood, the trees, are strewn and covered with garlands, wreaths, and bunches of blossom.

Look down that old lane and see the sour crab apples have flung the loveliest pink and white mantle over their rugged boughs ; the hawthorns, or May-blossom trees, are like spirits in white ; even the grass beneath is strewn so lavishly, with such profusion of sweet spring flowers, no royal bride could have had a more lavish profusion to strew along her path ; but then is not May the Queen of the months, and earth all her kingdom ? Now as the happy children run on they come to the mossy walls of the old Dromana garden, over which the grand old chesnuts are spreading their branches, shading the grass beneath, whilst their white cones of flowers are shining in the morning sun and beautifying these great high trees.

On and on the children run, they stop here and there to gather the sweet purple violets, which scent the air with their delicious fragrance. Down, down

the pathway leads to the little rushy, reedy spot where the tide is now high, and where the welcome boat is moored and ready to take them across the bright waters to the castle home of the Musgraves. As they quickly row across the Blackwater they pass under the shadow of the great rock of Dromana, whose lofty sides are clothed with the sweet yellow wall-flower, whose genial scent is wafted by the passing breeze.

How happy are the children as they spring from their seats while the boat touches the Tourin side of the river, and then off they quickly run until the old castle comes in sight !

It is an ancient embattled castle ; in old times a deep moat ran round its stout walls, and enabled it to stand many a siege. In the days when our ancestors were men of war, Tourin Castle was a famous fortress, and is often mentioned in Irish history ; but now a modern dwelling-house has been built at its side, adding convenience and comfort to the lofty, turreted Castle of Tourin.

On the steps the children are welcomed by the Lady of the Castle, whose countenance is beaming with love and kindness ; tenderly she brings all the little ones into her large nursery, and there are her boys assembled to add a loving welcome to that of their mother. The merry group being assembled in that sunny nursery, what laughing,

what eager talking and joyful little faces are gathered round ! .

The Lady of the Castle tells them all that they are to choose what drive they would prefer to take, and also what vehicle they would prefer to go in. Then such discussions arise : one says that he will go in the donkey chair, another that she will go on the rumble of the great German carriage ; whilst others say that they will ride the favourite donkeys 'Patty,' 'Gipsey,' and 'Micky,' kept solely for the children's use. Now the choice of the drive is to go by votes, and these are in favour of the Camphire Woods.

Soon the party are all off, and oh, what a happy, noisy party they are ! Some galloping on the donkeys at full speed, others driving the donkey chair, and more of the party in the favourite rumble of the carriage, telling stories to each other whilst the younger ones of the party are safely stowed inside the carriage by the Lady's mother. None of them are afraid of one so gentle and so good, and a seat next her is always eagerly sought for by the favoured little ones.

Oh ! what a pleasant day in 'Merric May ! ' Merry then indeed ! the glowing landscape, the distant mountains and woods all bathed in the glad May sun, the river flowing by in its ancient pride. 'The lark invisible, in flecked sky pouring

down his revelry.' Yes! everything was beautiful. Soon the place of destination is reached, and the old rustic door leading into the Camphire Woods is open, and the delighted children are allowed for hours to run and play, explore, and wander up and down this lovely place ; up such rugged paths, where between the opening of the trees are such lovely glimpses of the Blackwater and views of Dromana opposite. Then there are dashing waterfalls which the children hear before they come up to them. Oh ! what waterfalls they were ! falling and dashing all the long summer day over the fern-clad rocks and mossy stones, and bedewing the tall fox-gloves and sweet woodbine on either side with their silvery spray.

After admiring the three waterfalls, the little ones climb up long winding pathways until they reach the 'Robbers' Cave,' which was said to be inhabited by a fierce gang of robbers in olden times, but is now a large, empty, gloomy cavern, overgrown with briar and brushwood, and where the children delight to act a play called 'Robbers.' After this wild and romantic spot they pass on to another lonely place called 'The Echo's Rock,' on account of the clear and beautiful echo there ; the little group stand entranced, and loud and long the merry voices shout. Ah ! if echo had now their voices to answer to, how strange it would be !

but not on earth can echo ever give back their calls again. Call on, laugh on, dear children, enjoy a happy childhood, you little know what is before you in the chequered path of life.

In these woods were summer houses, all lined with moss, and paved with smooth, round pebbles ; they had curious oval tables of the fir tree, and quaint arm chairs to correspond ; these summer houses had rustic balconies overhanging the lovely Blackwater, and there you could see the boats gliding by. Now the white sail of a larger boat is seen, then the stroke of oars is heard and a little row boat has passed, then away in the far distance you hear the shout for the ferry at the Villierstown side of the river. Intermingled with these distant sounds the cuckoo's welcome note is heard clear above all the feathered choir of the woods, then the cuckoo flies off, but you can hear its sound far away, as the children say that it has flown off to the garden at Villierstown for papa and mamma to listen to. Oh, happy days they were in the Camphire Woods !

When the party have returned to the castle at Tourin, they are all called to dinner in the old, dark, handsome dining-room ; it is hung with huge crimson curtains, its walls are covered with great dimly seen pictures of ladies and gentlemen in stiff costumes of a by-gone day, the furniture is

of dark polished mahogany, and a splendid black marble chimney-piece overhangs the wide grate ; but notwithstanding the solemn look of the great room, never did pleasanter, happier children gather than at that board, where the Lady Bountiful had such a feast spread as one seldom sees now-a-days—such salmon from the Blackwater, such fowl, asparagus, green gooseberries, and rich cream.

However, this sweet May day, like all days on earth, is drawing to a close ; the children of the parsonage are to return home ; but before leaving, they are allowed to go to the beautiful garden of the castle and gather as many flowers as they like. Never can I forget our rapture as the dews of evening began to fall, when running to the great beds of the lily of the valley and rifling the dark green leaves of these sweet white flowers and thinking that they were all our own ; then gathering rich bunches of the lovely rose of May which loves to grow in ancient places. Then in addition to the flowers, the children were also permitted to pay a visit to the book-case in the nursery and carry away as many books as they wished—Miss Edgeworth's and Mrs. Sherwood's delightful tales, fairy stories, and books of poetry. Yes ! they have seen all the toys, gathered all the flowers, and swung in the great swing, and in short they

have had as much pleasure as it was possible to have condensed in one short day.

Now the lady and her boys walk down with them to the ferry, where the boat is waiting for them, and as they walk along the kind and dearly loved lady says, 'Now, dear children, you are on your way home to the half-way house to heaven,' for she always said Villierstown House was so happy, peaceful, and quiet, it was just nothing but half way to heaven. 'And,' she added, 'whenever you have to leave sweet Villierstown, be your lives long, or be they short, and wherever they are spent, you will always recal the days once enjoyed there as days spent in a paradise.'

Such were some of the happy days of our sweet sheltered childhood and youth in Villierstown ; but joyous and bright though they were, they constituted but a small part of the happiness of that place; for what made its real happiness, life, and joy, was that religion was its mainspring and the very pulse of its being. Flowers, trees, mountains, and rills, though beautiful in themselves, are as nothing without the glorious sun to shed light and radiance on them. And so it was patient Confidence, joyful Hope, and fervent Charity that illumined the place. Our dear father lived ever as in God's presence, and under the shadow of His wings, finding His faithfulness and truth to be his shield and buckler.

Each day brought round its duties and tasks, which were faithfully and most conscientiously performed ; and each night as he retired to rest, it was with the hope that he might hear the voice of the arch-angel and the trump of God before the morning. And then as to the Sundays at Villierstown ; there were never days like them anywhere else. A Sunday in that place was a kind of Transfiguration day —a day in which heaven's full roof seemed to bend very near the earth—a day in which, like the Shepherds on the Delectable Mountains, we could gain glimpses of the Celestial City with its golden streets and walls of pearl, and hear borne on the breeze distant notes of the harpers harping on their harps.

CHAPTER IV.



## CHAPTER IV.

SUNDAY AT VILLIERSTOWN—QUOTATIONS FROM SERMONS  
—SUNDAY EVENING.

 T was not like a Sunday anywhere else, and still it was not a day isolated from the week days—not that it was lowered to the latter so as to make no great difference in our thoughts and occupations. No ; but, it seemed as if the week days were raised to the higher level of the Lord's day, and each day had, as it were, a preparation going on for the first day of the week.

Sunday was a day we looked forward to and longed for. Our dear father used to say, quoting Keble's Easter Hymn, Let us look upon each Lord's day as

An Easter day in every week,  
And week days following in their train.  
Some fulness of thy blessing gain,  
Till all, both resting and employ,  
Be one Lord's day of holy joy.

These poetic words were not merely beautiful similes to his mind, they were true descriptions of

how he lived, making each day one of joy and peace in believing.

Every day and every hour his real and true pleasure was in the Lord. His conversation, his occupations and thoughts were all in His service ; in Him he lived and moved and had his being. When any of us were privileged to take a walk or drive with our dear father, his conversation was chiefly on spiritual things. Frequently during those happy drives the text for the Sunday's sermon was fixed upon, and the entire way beguiled by conversation on the sublimest themes that man can think upon or archangels rejoice in. His thoughts and heart were so filled with meditation on God's promises and the hope of the coming kingdom, that whenever he happened to walk alone he used to repeat aloud verses from his favourite chapters, and was often overheard by the bare-footed peasants uttering what they called 'Blessed words' as they noiselessly walked behind the man of God. At the same time he always tried to impress upon us that religion was not to consist in mere theory, but that it should be carried into the commonest actions of daily life ; that every action, even the most trifling, should be done to the Lord ; that a ploughman should try to make the most even furrows, a child to write the best

copy, or a servant to sweep a room to the best of her ability.

When Sunday drew near, we all felt that a festival was approaching—a day of gladness and rejoicing, and delight. On Saturday the preparations commenced, so that no clouds of earthly care might come over its calm brightness. The dear mother gave an additional hour to her store-room in dispensing her stores in a double supply for the Sunday ; the garden was locked up, the children's drawing books, and lesson books, and atlases, were stowed away, the linen was received from the laundress Nelly Brunsfield, and put into the various presses and drawers, the large fruit pie and cake were baked and put away in the lärder, and servants as well as the family at Villierstown felt on Saturday night that all the work was completed, and a day of rest was drawing near. How gladly we used all to hail the light of the Sunday morning ! The sun used to seem brighter than ever on that day, and the flowers to look gayer, and the birds to sing a sweeter melody and to join in chorus to our thoughts : ' This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.'

Before breakfast, all the children commenced the day by learning portions of Scripture, and oh !

how happily we assembled round the breakfast table all arrayed in our Sunday's best—

Like spring flowers in their best array,  
All silence and all smiles.

At eleven o'clock the young men of the village collected in the reading-desk pew, and were instructed by their beloved pastor in the Scriptures. The class consisted of shoemakers, sawyers, carpenters, and slaters ; and Sunday after Sunday, as they met there, they were taught in the mysteries of the Epistles. The last book our dear father ever explained to them was the Revelations. The Word of God was just finished to them as their Sabbath instruction drew to a close ; but we may hope and pray that the preparation for a better world will never cease until the real Lord's day shall dawn, the never-ending Sabbath begin.

When the bell sounded for divine service from the old grey tower the congregation assembled ; old, young, and middle aged, feeling as they thronged the aisle, that indeed they were coming up to the house of the Lord ; each having been instructed to repeat to themselves in a reverent spirit, 'This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.' In no place of worship has there ever been more surely felt the presence of the living God than in Villierstown

Church. Although we could not with our visible eye see the pillar of smoke by day or the pillar of fire by night, we could *feel* that they were there, and no less real because they were spiritual. Even the most careless and worldly visitor who worshipped there exclaimed on leaving the place, 'I never was in such a solemn church before ; there is something in it I cannot understand.' All felt the awe like Jacob at Bethel, and some felt with the awe deep joy and an earnest of that time when the kingdom will come, and God will dwell with His people and be their God. —

The Sunday service having commenced with prayer and supplication, with bowed knees we confessed our sins, and felt that our High Priest was very near to speak words of pardon and peace to our souls, and so to shed His love abroad upon our hearts as to make us long for the time to come when we should worship Him without a cloud in His glory—

Where congregations ne'er break up,  
And Sabbaths have no end.

When the 'Te Deum' was chanted, however, dear father entered into the spirit of that glorious hymn. In the 'Sanctus' he humbly and reverently bent his head, not from any formal observance, but really because he felt himself in his King's presence as

truly as is said when the bright-winged Seraphim uttered thrice Holy with twain they covered their face, feeling unworthy to look upon Him whose throne is high and lifted up, and whose train fills His temple.

At the verse in that song of praise, 'Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ,' and the choir burst into a louder strain, our dear father used almost to shout aloud, 'Thou *art* the King of Glory ;' in some measure then anticipating the joy of the kingdom when Christ's praises shall be sung aloud by every created thing ; *then* once more we shall hear that now silent voice acknowledging his King and praising Him in a far louder and sweeter strain.

Our dear father's favourite anthem was, 'Oh ! send out Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me, let them bring me to Thy holy hill and to Thy Tabernacles.'

Even now I can vividly recal the look of holy rapture which overspread his features as those words were sung, and he walked up the aisle with glistening eyes in his white surplice, and his prayer-book in his hands.

When the congregation heard the sermon commence, few were there but knew that such instruction was to be given as seldom fell to their lot to hear. Not only did the earnest fervour of the

preacher strike home to each one's heart, but also the loving truths seemed to awaken new life, coming home as they did with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power.

The real reason of the force of his teaching was, that hours before entering into the pulpit, the preacher had been alone in His closet with the Lord Jesus; he had close personal dealing with *Him*, he had come into His presence, looked Him in the face, and heard Him speak; without this preparatory work he might have preached in vain, with it his words were words of fire, and they often made our hearts burn within us. Yes, every part of his teaching bore witness to the Lord Jesus Christ, His character, His office, and His works.

It has been beautifully said, that hereafter every chord in the new song will be Jesus. So Jesus, and Jesus only, was the theme of those never-to-be-forgotten sermons. Sometimes it was showing Him as the Sacrifice or the Priest, the Prophet or the Shepherd, the Brother or the King; but especially he loved to show Him as the Bridegroom of the Church, and to dilate on the rich blessings with which He has endowed, and the high state of holy confidence and spiritual communion to which it is His purpose to raise her. He used to direct us to see the Lord by the eye of faith, as

the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely, as our Beloved and our Friend ; then he used to show if we really loved our Saviour we would desire His presence amongst us, for wherever true love exists, there must be enjoyment in the society of the Beloved, and a desire for His presence, and so should we long and yearn for His appearing, coming, and glory.

Between forty and fifty years ago he said that we were approaching the close of this dispensation, and that the time was drawing near when our absent Lord would return in glory, take to Himself His kingdom, and reign on the earth. He explained the mysteries of the ancient prophets on this glorious theme, and also solemnly warned his listeners on the necessity of being made ready to abide the day of His coming, and to stand when He appeareth, for he warned them that though the glory was great, he could also tell them that at the same time days of mourning, woe and desolation, were coming on the Church and the world !

Outwardly all was peace in those days. The Bourbons were reigning in security on the throne of France ; the Pope was undisturbed on his seven-hilled throne ; the blue valley of the Moselle echoed with the glad sound of the vintage, every man sat under his own vine and fig-tree, and the sound of war seemed well nigh forgotten in the

world. But the faithful preacher warned them of the sad days which have dawned on us all only too surely ; wars, and rumours of wars, distress of nations with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring, men's hearts failing them for fear ; and he used to say that the time would come when they should feel that a prophet had been among them.

I remember well a very solemn sermon on 'Take no thought for the morrow,' which he closed by saying, 'God would have His people without carelessness, but in what manner? Not by closing our eyes and refusing to be convinced of the danger, and trying to delude ourselves into a false security. This is not God's way of giving peace ; on the contrary, His Word expressly warns us that there will be perilous times in the last days, and that before God fills His house with His glory, He will shake the heavens, the earth, the sea, and the dry land.

' But while the Christian studying the word of prophecy, and attending to the signs of the times, must be deeply and awfully impressed as to the solemnity of the days on which we are entering, at the same time it is his duty to take no thought for the morrow, and to drive away all anxiety from his mind, from knowing that all things are overruled by his Heavenly Father, and that the wrath of man is under the control of Him who says to

the waves of the sea: "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther."

'Just as our Lord did not conceal from His disciples the approaching desolations of Jerusalem in all their horrors. He warned them of all the calamities which were impending over the guilty city, but at the same time He told them that not a hair of their head should perish, that a refuge was provided for them.

'In the same way, whilst the Lord warns us of the desolating judgments of the last days, He shows us that there will be a deliverance for His people, for when He will show wonders in the heaven and the earth, blood, fire, and pillars of smoke in Mount Zion, in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord will call. And that before the seals of judgment are poured out and the winds of desolation let loose from the four corners of the earth, the servants of our God must be sealed in their foreheads, sealed in order that they may be delivered.

'Therefore on the strength of these and such-like promises, it becomes the Christian to be free from anxiety and alarm, to take no thought for the morrow, but like the early disciples, as they saw the signs that gave notice of the destruction of Jerusalem, in patience to possess their souls. Therefore endeavour, with the assistance of the

Holy Spirit, to enter into the privileges which belong to you as members of Christ.

‘Live without carefulness, endeavour to live each day as it were the last, and each day strive to improve to the uttermost whatever opportunities it may bring with it. Learn ever to look to God, to wait upon Him, to abide under the shadow of His wings, to cast every burden upon Him, and when ye hear the notice of the approaching tempest and see the clouds gather as the days of vengeance are coming on, ye will in patience possess your souls, knowing that while ye are walking with God and abiding in Christ, “the eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”’

Oh ! how often in that church did we feel the presence of the Lord to be very near ! When the preacher appealed to our souls, asking us if we did not feel our hearts to burn within us as did the hearts of the disciples when the Saviour walked with them to Emmaus, a solemn silence ensued, a breathless pause—and in our innermost souls we acknowledged that Christ was really in our very midst. These were blessed hours, and highly honoured were we to be led so far on

Tabor’s sunbright steep.

On Sacrament Sundays I can in words give no adequate idea of the blessed service so heartily entered into and so rejoicingly felt.

The sermon on those Sundays always was on the Sacred Feast, so as to rouse our souls with love to Him who gave Himself for us, and with joy and gratitude to draw near to His table and pay our vows in the presence of His people.

Surely these Feasts celebrated twice a month in Villierstown Church were real though faint types of the joy prepared for the Redeemed at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

In the 'Sanctus,' when the choir chanted the solemn words, it seemed indeed and in truth that the heavenly host joined in the song, saying, 'Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord Most High.' Again, in the 'Gloria in Excelsis,' how fervently our father joined in that sublime song of praise! and so great was his joy that while the triumphant words were sung, his eyes used to fill with tears and his countenance become illumined with holy joy and gladness of soul, for then indeed he felt that such praise and thanksgiving were a faint foreshadowing of the New Song which will yet be sung on Mount Zion by those who have followed the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

The service being over we left the solemn house of prayer, and returning to our happy, rose-covered home strolled off to the shrubbery of the parsonage, to enjoy a walk with our parents for an

hour before the simple Sunday dinner was ready. In my mind's eye now I can vividly see the family party slowly pacing up and down the gravel walk. Dear father with his silvery hair, bright eyes, and sunny smile ; dear little mother in her plain almost quakerish dress, becoming the minister's wife ; the four sisters in their white muslin Sunday frocks and straw bonnets ; the bright beautiful Philip, the flower of the flock ; and then little Cramer, who was just beginning to toddle, bringing up the rear : yes, there I see them passing the Beech hedge, and the clump of trees on-to where they have their favourite view of the lovely Blackwater flowing on in Sabbath silence, and beyond the Dromana Woods old Knockmeiledown raising her peaked top in the stilly air, while all above and below seems wrapt as in one universal garb of love, and in the stillness of the Millennium.

Season of rest, the tranquil soul  
Feels thy sweet calm and melts in love,  
And while the heavenly moments roll,  
Faith sees a brighter heaven above.

The plain Sunday dinner was always at three o'clock, and as soon as it was over our dear father in his little study prepared for the evening service, whilst each child tried to learn off by heart some chapter from the Bible, or a hymn from the 'Christian Year.' Oh what a comfort those chapters

and hymns have been to us in after life! on the beds of sickness, and in solitude, loneliness and sorrow, none can tell what they have been to us all. Little did we know in those sunshiné hours that we were laying up a sweet store for many a long and dreary day.

At five o'clock the evening service commenced, and again the congregation assembled in the House of the Lord. What happy groups used to pass along under the beech trees, and enter the iron gates of the old church-yard; the long evening shadows of the lime trees resting on the grass!

How solemn the church used to look, as we entered it in the dim twilight, and how calm and soothing was the evening service always! The beautiful prayers of the Church, the Psalms and Lessons, then the ancient hymns, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord,' and 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace;' and then how joyous and triumphant were the modern hymns which all used to enter into with all their heart, 'Lo He comes with clouds descending,' or 'Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!' Yes! as they pealed along through the solemn aisles, in our hearts did we believe that the great Sabbath of the Millennium was even at the doors.

The prayers and praises being ended, our dear father used to wind up the evening worship by an

extempore lecture from the Old Testament. Oh ! how he used to open to us all the types from the beginning of the world, and unravel to us the wonderful purpose of God since time began ! and every heart could not fail to be filled with faith and hope in listening to those rousing words, so that when the service was ended and the congregation dispersed to their homes, they might have said, like the multitude to whom the power of our blessed Saviour was manifested, 'We have seen strange things to-day.' Happy and sweet was the evening of the Lord's day in the parlour of the Parsonage House. A tranquil joy rested on each face as we gathered round the tea table to enjoy the quiet meal. Then afterwards round the fire in winter, or the large open window in summer, each child repeated, as well as it could remember, fragments from the sermon or lecture, and the tender parents used to remark with interest how clearly one dear child could remember the *plan* of the sermon ; how another delighted in the openings of Scripture ; another on the character of God, His tenderness and love ; and the tiny little ones could show by some well-remembered and carefully-treasured word or passage that the good seed had not fallen on their baby hearts in vain ; each then used to repeat the chapter or hymn which they had conned over during the day. And oh ! how

proud they felt at the kind words of praise and encouragement which their parents bestowed on them for their pains! The faithful servants were then summoned, and a chapter from the 'Revelations' and an earnest prayer concluded the day's worship; and as we all retired to rest, we felt that a Sunday in Villierstown was no faint foretaste of the rest which remaineth for the people of God.

CHAPTER V.



## CHAPTER V.

FAITH AND HOPE—THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH—THE FAMILY EXPEDITION TO ARDMORE—FIRST SORROW IN THE PARSONAGE—THE SUMMER CHILD.

HE five-and-twenty years of our dear father's ministry at Villierstown were very remarkable years in the church of Christ, for during that time the long-forgotten hope of the Lord's second advent and appearing in glory was revived among His people. Our father was not personally acquainted with Irving, Drummond, Frere, and others, who, after deep and earnest study of prophecy in conjunction with the state of the world, were led to see that the latter days were drawing near, and that the time was at hand for the establishment on this earth of that glorious kingdom which cannot be destroyed: these great and wondrous truths were indeed the joy of his soul. And in his quiet, secluded parsonage he joined in spirit in the prayers of these holy men and shared their hope, firmly believing that the night of this world was far spent, and the time

of our Lord's millennial reign on this earth was very near.

It was our father's most cherished hope that he would with his mortal eyes see his Lord descend to the visible millennial throne, and extend over the world His kingdom of righteousness and peace. And so fully did he enter into this hope, that by degrees, like others, he was led to see the necessity of a preparation in the Church, so that she might be ready to abide the day of the Lord's coming in power and glory. As he watched and waited, hoped and prayed in stillness and seclusion in quiet Villiers-town, a dawn of light appeared on the spiritual horizon to those who looked for it ; so it was with feelings of the most unbounded rapture and awe that our father and a few chosen friends heard the good news from afar, that after the lapse of more than eighteen hundred years the long silent voice of the Holy Ghost was again heard in the Church. That was a glorious time for those who had ears to hear, for they really felt that the Lord had visited His people, and as with Israel of old at the report of His goodness by Moses and Aaron, 'The people believed, and they bowed the head and worshipped.'

It is not the *present* intention of these brief and imperfect memories to enter into these themes, so sacred and solemn, but it would not be true or

sincere ... describe our father's outward life, without giving some insight also into the main-spring of that life, and of his teaching ; for the hope of seeing his Lord and Saviour purified him, and ripened him for heaven.

Now I will proceed in my narrative to the summer of 1845, when, for the first time, sorrow entered into the happy parsonage of Villierstown. Our mother has often told us that for nineteen years grief was a thing quite unknown in that peaceful home. No serious illness had ever attacked either parents or children ; and although they were not rich, they certainly had none of the cankering cares and perplexities of poverty. Yes ! disappointment, care, and trial came to others, but they passed by us as if we were endowed with a charmed life. So one year followed another with its golden suns, and fruits, and flowers, joy, and gladness ; but sorrow, the common lot of man, seemed not to have existed for one of us : nevertheless, though at first it only loomed in the distance like a cloud of mist, it surely did not pass us by in the summer of 1845, as I will proceed to relate.

It was the custom of the Homan family every year, about the first week of August, to repair to the seaside for two months, so that the children might enjoy the benefit of bathing, and that the

holiday might recruit the dear parents for their work and labour of love.

For many years these summer holidays were spent at a lovely, lonely place called Heloick ; our kind friend Lord Stuart de Decies having allowed us the use of a romantic cottage on a wild cliff there. Our parents' chief pleasure there was in wandering over the beautiful head of Heloick, or in sitting on the rocks and making acquaintance with the 'Christian Year,' which was a new book in those days ; whilst the children looked for shells and played hide-and-seek in the curious caves in the little cove. A kind old lady used to take us to drive with her in a donkey-cart, and oh ! how amazed we used to be when, instead of a whip, she always made the donkey trot along by poking him with a lobster's claw ! But everything brings happiness to children, and I never think of the Heloick days but as days of unmixed happiness and perfect enjoyment, from our morning dip in the sea till we retired to rest in the curious hammocks in the gallery of the Heloick cottage. As we grew older this retired spot was exchanged for a village called Ardmore, and a very pretty and picturesque place it is. On a hill in the background rises one of those curious round towers peculiar to Ireland ; no one has ever been able to find out their origin, but they seem to tell

a wondrous tale as they raise their old gray heads in the still air, and for long centuries watch decay and change in all around them. Close to the Round Tower is a very curious and beautiful ruined church which contains many ancient monuments, and some tombs of the Crusaders, and there is an arch there leading into the ruined chancel covered with quaint carvings of poppies to represent the sleep of death; the churchyard contains the tomb of 'St. Decian,' the patron saint of Ardmore, and is a shrine for pilgrims from all parts of Ireland, as they believe that a small portion of earth from his grave preserves the possessor from any ill or peril by land or by sea. There are many beautiful and romantic walks on the cliffs adjoining Ardmore, and every spot is ripe with interest, from the holy well to the old house of Ardoe, once, many years ago, the birthplace of the lovely Duchess de Castries, an ancestress of the now famous Field Marshal MacMahon.

How glad we always were as July drew to an end, and we made our little preparations for the Ardmore holidays!

We generally started on a Monday morning; and oh! how eagerly on the Sunday evening our young footsteps flew down the shrubbery paths, to see if old Knockmeiledown looked clear for the coming morning! How gladly we went to

sleep, and how gladly we opened our eyes and hastened to dress whilst the carts were packed with luggage, and the old gray horse got an additional feed for the journey! How we enjoyed helping to pack away the crocks of yellow butter from the dairy, the baskets of gooseberries and currants, or early peaches from the garden; and all Tommy Bransfield's delicious vegetables; how we danced round the cook as she added to the supplies by producing from the larder fresh loaves of bread, cakes and pies! Yes, all was animation, hope, and joy.

Ere we started all our humble friends from the village came to say good-bye, and to offer their sincere wishes that we might have nothing but happiness till we returned to them. Then two jaunting cars were filled with merry, joyous beings, and away we started in the early summer morning, everything seeming to sing to us of joy and hope alone.

What a pleasant drive it used to be from Villierstown to Ardmore as we chatted away or told stories to beguile the road, and how we used to shout out 'The sea, the sea,' as we gained the first glimpse of the dancing waves from the top of the high hill near Clashmore! And, how we laughed as we compared ourselves to the Greeks of old! Even now I can vividly recal the delight we

had in seeing the fresh green seaweed strewing the road and the healthy perfume which it exhaled.

Generally we rested on our way to Ardmore for several hours with our kind friends at Duiting Bay, and what a merry party used to assemble round the well-spread breakfast table there, the boys in their carter's frocks, and the girls in their new seaside dresses ! Oh, how we used to enjoy watching the white sails on the blue sea, and hearing the waves dashing on the gravelly shore ! for though Villierstown was pleasant, its trees shady, and its flowers sweet, we thought that there was nothing like a change, and nothing like the sea, the wild free sea, and so

Unthinking, idle, wild, and young,  
We laugh'd, and talk'd, and danced, and sung ;  
And proud of health and freedom vain,  
Dream'd not of sorrow, care, or pain.

Yes, we felt as if the world was made for us alone, and with the gay freedom of youth and health we ran about the cliffs blither than any of the sea gulls which wheeled over our heads. True, we were told that this world was a world of care and trial, but we heeded it not, care and trial were not for *us*. We heard of sickness and death wasting other happy homes, but surely we thought they would pass *ours* by. Such were our undisci-

plined and inexperienced feelings ; and though we knew it not, as we started on our happy little journey early in the August of 1845, a shadow was on our path, a cloud, though no bigger than a man's hand, was on our sky ; but we saw it not, for we intended that summer holiday to be even happier than any of the preceding ones, for our dear kind Grandmother Cameron and Uncle Lovett had settled to join us at old Ardmore, and to live in the pretty Elizabethan cottage near the new church, whilst we were in Mr. Jackson's cottage on the cliff : and, oh ! what happy drives, picnics and expeditions of all kinds we eagerly planned, thinking that we were the most highly-favoured of earth's children !

A few days passed on, and they were just as we expected, days of cloudless sunshine and unbroken happiness ; but on the Sunday afternoon, to our surprise and grief, the first sorrow came to the happy family by hearing the eldest boy, the noble Duke, the promising Philip, complaining of a sore eye. At once the most skilful doctor in the place was summoned, and he pronounced it to be ophthalmia, and at once prescribed the most stringent remedies.

Day followed day, and our bright joyous brother lay on a sick bed in a dark room ; but though we felt anxious, we thought that soon he would be all

right again. Philip was a boy of great promise, so his parents were justly proud of him ; he was their 'summer child,' for he was born in the lovely month of June, when the glad earth was offering all her best, and being the first son he was more welcome than all the wealth of roses and summer fruit, and the plentiful shower of the early rain, which descended as though to make the parched ground glad after a long drought, on the day of his birth.

He promised to have all the noble, manly beauty of his grandfather, Colonel Cameron, as well as talents beyond the average, for when he was only three years old he could read fluently, and soon after six mastered the Latin grammar ; study was his delight, but with all this he had such high animal spirits and bright fearless disposition, that as he embarked on the voyage of life his parents could confidently anticipate a brilliant career—but it was not to be. 'God's ways are not our ways, or His thoughts our thoughts.' The summer child was never to see the autumn of life ; his career was cut short on earth ; but there is another life and a happier world, in which he may be doing a higher work than any here below.

Days of waiting, hoping, and watching, succeeded each other in long and dreary length in the cottage at Ardmore ; but alas ! no recovery came to the patient sufferer ; with tears and prayers the

agonized parents bent over the couch on which their darling lay, and never can I forget with what anguish night and day they sobbed out the words of our beautiful Litany ; but though they wept with agony, the courage of the 'Summer Child' never gave way ; he used to say, with a sweet smile, ' Well ! doubtless there is a purpose in it all ; and surely it is better to enter life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.' Sometimes he would even jest about the coming calamity, and say, ' After all I shall be only like Hannibal and other great people.'

It was a sad day when our dear grandmother and uncle left Ardmore, as he was obliged to return to his parochial duties.

Though so many years have passed since then, and so many and varied changes have come, I remember as if it were yesterday how blue the sea looked that sweet September morning, and how brightly the sun shone, and how sad we felt in thinking that our eagerly expected holiday had come and *gone*, but no happiness had come to us. I can recal the car driving up to the door for the travellers, and as we all wept, our dear father saying, as he took leave of them, ' It may be that our next meeting will be before the Throne.' They never met on earth again. In little more than a year after Uncle Lovett was called to rest,

and our dear grandmother did not long survive him.

Hope there was none now that Philip's eye could ever be restored ; and oh ! the anguish and distress which his parents went through baffles description. Among those dreary days and that sad time, however, I can never forget one sweet evening walk which I took alone with my dear father. We left the little cottage just before sunset, and passing the old Martello Tower we strolled on to our once favourite walk along the cliffs. Everything in nature looked as beautiful as when the 'Summer Child' bounded by our side, and his silvery laughter echoed in the air. We reached at length a place called 'The Tea Rock,' a kind of flat table rock which can only be gained by a very rugged pathway down a steep side of the cliff, but when there you are well repaid for the trouble in reaching it ; overhead are the grand rugged cliffs covered with lichens and wild flowers, and the sea perpendicularly beneath looks so vast and solemn.

The Irish name of the place is the 'Rock of Tay,' and on this flat table of Nature's own carving is inscribed—what used to be the delight of our childish days—the name of King William the Fourth, chiselled by his own royal hands in the

days when he was midshipman, and paid a visit to the Tea Rock.

That evening we climbed down to this sequestered place, and as one by one we watched the sunbeams fading from the sea, my father talked to me on what seemed a new theme, and that was *suffering*: he showed me how man's portion here below must include trial, disappointment and sorrow, but how they are messengers sent by a heavenly Father for the purification and perfecting of His dear children; he pointed out to me that the Christian should not even wish to be exempt from what the King of Saints and all His train have experienced; but after all, how sorrow is only to last for a little while, a 'brief portion,' but the glory to be revealed is to be eternal, everlasting.

Returning to our cottage home, and the dark room of the loved sufferer, we repeated together the beautiful hymn in the 'Christian Year' for the sixteenth Sunday after Trinity, so sweetly and mournfully in accordance with our thoughts.

Long years have passed and gone since then, but the mellowed influence of that evening walk has never passed away from me. Often when tempted to repine in hours of sickness, trial and disappointment, I just recal the scene, with its deepening twilight, the evening star rising over

the rippling sea, and the calm, gentle voice by my side repeating

So wanderers ever fond and true  
Look homeward thro' the evening sky.  
Without a streak of heaven's soft blue  
To aid Affection's dreaming eye.

The wanderer seeks his native bower,  
And we will look and long for Thee,  
And thank Thee for each trying hour,  
Wishing not struggling to be free.

Sorrowfully and sadly we left Ardmore, and returned to Villierstown ; there was no merriment in the packing up, the carts were laden in silence, imbedded tears stole down the servants' cheeks, even the dogs Tasso and Sinbad were subdued and sad. There was no hope that Philip's eye could be cured, for though eminent physicians came from Cork and other places their remedies were applied in vain.

We knew now that our turn had come ; the first sorrow had entered the family ; but alas for us ! we knew not what was also coming. It was a trial, a bitter trial, but a far greater and more crushing calamity was speeding its way to the once secure and sheltered nest.



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CHAPTER VI.



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## CHAPTER VI.

SUMMER AT VILLIERSTOWN—LAST BIRTHDAY THERE—  
THE POTATO BLIGHT.

**F**EW little any of us can tell on a New-Year's day what the newborn year has in store for us! Well it is for us that God in mercy veils coming sorrow from His people's sight, till with its advent He also sends strength to enable us to bear it. So 1846 came in much as other years. We had a trial the preceding year as I have related, but with the buoyancy of youth we hoped that the happiness of 1846 would atone for it, and Philip was more sanguine than any of us; but all our hopes could not prevent that year from being a very sorrowful one, not only to us, but to poor Ireland, for it ushered in the potato blight, and the fearful famine and pestilence which desolated and depopulated the island, making it ever since 'a year to be remembered.'

In the spring of 1846 our dear father took Philip to Dublin, to have a final consultation with

'Wilde,' the most celebrated oculist of the day ; and was cheered and comforted by making acquaintance with M. Langford Symes, and other good men, whose stedfast faith and bright hopes afterwards in like manner sustained his sorrowing family.

As spring deepened into summer the eldest daughter of the family also went to the capital with a dear and valued friend to be present at a wedding ; and these little departures were great events in the quiet home.

That year Villierstown, if possible, looked more lovely than ever in the warm sunshine of May and June ; and to give some idea of what summer was in that sweet place, I will here transcribe my dear sister's vivid description of her last birthday there.

#### MY LAST BIRTHDAY AT VILLIERSTOWN.

ON June 16, 1846, when we awoke in the morning, I remember the scent and the sound of everything as it entered my room and my heart. The window of my room faced the west, so in the early morning it was in deep cool shade ; beyond the garden immediately beneath my window lay the rich meadows.

In the midst of the high grass the mowers were busy at their work, and the sharpening of their

scythes had a peculiar summer sound in the fresh morning air. Beyond these meadows flowed the Blackwater, mirroring on its glassy surface the leafy woods of June, whilst every sail-boat as it glided along flung long, bright reflections of light across the brimming tide.

At seven o'clock we were always awakened by our dear father's calling us to get up by singing in a playful, merry voice,—

Get up, little Missy, arise ! arise !  
The flowers are blowing,  
The birds are singing,  
The lambs are bleating ;  
Get up, little Missy, arise ! arise !

And that pleasant voice made us always open our eyes with sweet and happy anticipations for the day.

Oh ! how well I can recal the look of his study that morning when I duly entered it ! I can again in fancy see its window facing the north, and the ivied wall beyond, where the birds were madly singing for joy as if beside themselves with delight at the lovely day in the summer tide.

I can see the open desk on the square table, and beside it the small Greek Testament, the Hebrew Bible, and the well worn Polyglott. On this desk were written week after week his beautiful sermons.

I think that the angels must have loved to linger there and watch the words flowing from his pen, telling of the Saviour's love, His glory and His kingdom.

Not only were written here these stirring themes, but also were penned letters of instruction and consolation to many a pilgrim on earth's road.

The good and blessing which came from that desk no one could reckon or sum up, nor can it all be known until that day when the good and faithful servant shall be made ruler over many things, and enter into the joy of his Lord.

I can never forget on that bright morning how pleased my dear father looked, as he said he had a little treat in store for me, and lifting a thermometer from a little red box on the chimney-piece he gave me a small sealed packet containing a tiny silver pencil case, and a birthday letter from my dear absent sister ; then he gave me a box of self-lighting matches, saying, 'This is not your present, but take it for a token that your real birthday gift is coming in a box of books from Kerslake this evening ;' then he said we must hasten to breakfast, so as to be duly ready for the nine o'clock service.

As I sat down to the table I received a number of other presents ; my mother gave me a beautiful Album, handsomely bound ; Annie, a Limerick

lace collar, and lilac silk handkerchief; Fan the Fair, a pair of tea-green kid gloves, on which she had laid all her little hoard; Philip, a pretty book, called 'Canon Schmid's Tales'; even the youngest child, little Cramer, had his tiny offering, dear wee Tim (as we used to call him), how well I can recall him to my mind's eye, sitting by his dearly-loved mother on his high chair, with his large blue eyes and earnest, thoughtful expression! When Cramer was an infant, he was so delicate that old nurses used to predict often that he could not live, but infant as he was he used to resent the idea, and indignantly exclaim, 'Tim won't die,' showing what a brave little heart he possessed.

As we were all seated at the breakfast-table, we could enjoy the scents and sights of the lovely place.

Before the open window lay the little grass garden, which though small was at all seasons of the year bright with the sweetest and earliest flowers, from the first pale snowdrop to the last rose of summer. But June was its crowning month of flowers; for her roses were out, and the roses at Villierstown were such as were seldom seen elsewhere: so freely and abundantly did they blow, that strangers used to talk and write about 'The thickets of moss roses at Villierstown'; and this June, if possible, they were in greater beauty than

ever, as, added to our thickets of moss roses, our dear mother had rows of standard roses, all new; and so lovely, our dear father used to say, that one in particular was so exquisite that it ought to be called 'The Rose of Sharon.'

How well I can see them all as they looked that morning, and the trees so cool and shady; the walnut tree with the rustic seat beneath it, the tall poplar with its quivering shadow, playing over the high meadow grass, and my own favourite evergreen oak!

How well it is that mortals cannot see beyond a day, or know beforehand what the future has in store, for how sad we should have been if we had known that this was the last June for us in our land of Goshen!

At nine o'clock our dear father had daily service in the old church, so we had a pleasant short walk across a grassy common to the house of prayer; it was lined on one side by great beech trees, and on the other by apple orchards. How still and cool was the church as we entered it, morning after morning; its windows wide open, admitting the fresh air and the sweet perfume from the yellow blossom of the lime trees which surrounded it!

Day after day the faithful pastor read and prayed there, and the still summer air resounded

with the sounds of praise and thanksgiving as the 'T<sup>u</sup> Deum,' 'Venite,' and 'Jubilate' were chanted.

Day after day did these sweet songs of Zion ascend like incense through the deep blue sky ; and though ever since the sounds of the morning have been for us the city's hum or the noise of martial life, still the memory of those hallowed sounds in the morning air will ever re-echo in our hearts and remain engraven on our memory with reverence and love.

When the service was ended, and the congregation slowly dispersed down the village street, how little could we then have realised that the sixteenth of June would indeed come round again in its annual course ; but alas ! that Villierstown Church should know us no more, and that when those fragrant shady limes were to shed their faded leaves. Ah ! then over whom should earth close ? and that for us we should only feel an aching void that Time could never fill. Yes ! it will remain until time shall be no more, and till God shall wipe away tears from off all faces.

On that pleasant birthday we were allowed to spend our time just as we liked ; so we three younger children agreed to be off for the woods, and enjoy reading 'Canon Schmid's Tales,' under the forest trees. Our way to the woods lay through the green lane, and up the copse, and past the old

quarry ; and all these pathways were shaded by beech trees, oaks, and elms, all of them unfurling their green foliage to the summer sky, and making for us beneath such cool shadows that it was a delight to walk abroad even beneath the noonday sun ; and so we walked and ran till we reached our favourite resting-place, which we had named 'The Row of Trees,' as this same noble row of trees bounded the skirts of the woods, and from them a wide view of the Blackwater was obtained.

Oh ! how happily flew the summer hours as we sat under these trees ! How fresh the breeze rustled through the woods, making the shadow of the beech-trees hover on our mossy bank, and what a view we had to admire ! Before us shone the Blackwater as it wound its course through rich pastures, fair green woods, hills and dales, joined in the distance by its little tributary the river *Bride*, which looked from afar like a thread of shining silver as its waters sparkled in the sunshine ; whilst away in the far west the blue hills bounded the view, ever reminding us of the Delectable Mountains in the 'Pilgrim's Progress.'

As we remained feasting our eyes on all this beauty our ears could catch the calls for the ferry-boat at the opposite shore, but so mellowed was the sound by distance that we were obliged to hold our breath to hear ; and even now, if ever we

hear a distant call in the open air, it brings back this scene.

We were called home to dinner by the sound of Lowther, our man-servant, blowing a horn, and when we entered the bed-rooms, how pleasant they looked with open windows and bright roses peeping in, everything seeming to say, 'Summer is here! Summer is here!' After dinner, we all seated ourselves on the steps of the hall facing the east. That side of the parsonage house was literally covered with roses from the foundation to the roof.

On one side of the hall-door was the delicate wax-like monthly rose, and on the other the beauteous Bengal rose, which was in its prime in June.

We sat there among the roses enjoying ourselves until Jane Burke brought the post-bag, and also the good news that the box of books from Bristol was at the post-office. So our dear, kind father was delighted, because he said that after all my present would come on my birthday; and instantly he ordered off Paddy Daniel with the cart and pony to bring home in triumph the longed-for box.

The evening shadows now growing long, away to the garden we all went, all of us delighting in the pleasant occupation of watching the sweet

flowers, the geraniums, the fragrant sweet pea, and mignonette; then all the roses, Provence, moss, princess's, and Lady Peel's. Each treasured flower having received its evening refreshment from our little watering-pots, we went to gather fruit for our tea. Oh ! how happy we were plucking the nets from the cherry-trees, and filling our baskets, lined with leaves, with the ripe crimson and purple cherries on the south wall, and then running off to the strawberry-beds to gather the delicious strawberries ! Ah ! how plain I can see that garden now : the rustic arch with the Bengal rose climbing over it, the sheltered arbour with its rustic seat, Charlotte's row of bee-hives, Daisy's blue lavender, and Annie's curious espalier tree, all rejoicing in the dew of evening and her soft downy shadows !

When our visit to the garden was over, we paid our respects to the farm-yard, and saw the cows led out to their dewy fields again after having filled the cans with their frothy milk. So the business of the day was over ; the workmen left their scythes and hay-forks, the gardener locked his gates, and the fowl were collected for their roost, and the songs of the birds were hushed as they slept on dewy branches, or found their nests among thick ivy, or in between the rose branches that covered the walls.

After our happy, merry tea and feast of fruit, we all said that we must just take a walk through the woods, and meet the cart coming back with the box of books. Then all of us, accompanied by our dear parents and the dogs 'Tasso' and 'Sinbad,' walked up the road that lay through the Dromana woods. That summer evening the sweet twilight seemed to linger over hill, wood, and river; so even when night came it was not dark. As we walked along we disturbed the rabbits at their evening meal, for we saw them nibbling on the dewy grass and then frisking off to the woods to escape our intrusion. So calm and still was the summer night, our dear father called us to stand quiet and 'Listen to silence,' for not a sound disturbed the scene as the noiseless dew descended, and not a leaf moved on the forest trees, their heavy foliage looking like velvet tapestries in the mellow, calm night.

Beneath our pathway down in the valley the river flowed along, and we could hear the sound of oars as they struck the water, and a little boat sped on over the glassy tide.

Everything in hill, valley, river, and field, seemed teeming with beauty, peace, and joy; the very hedges festooned with trailing roses and delicate grasses, the murmuring streams hidden beneath branches and brambles, the stones even covered

with moss, and everything great and small made so very beautiful it was hard to realise that summer night that we were not in Eden. In after years, when I lived in the sandy deserts of Lind, it was a very different landscape that met the eye ; *there*, as far as the eye could reach, nothing was seen but never-ending wastes of yellow sand that never yielded one blade of grass, or reflected a shadow from a single tree ; and it was then difficult to imagine that we were under the same sun and sky that we once knew in happy Villierstown.

Arriving at our quiet home after our walk, the delightful business of unpacking the box of books commenced, and to my great joy a new book by the authoress of 'Amy Herbert' was given to me, called 'Laneton Parsonage ;' it was selected and ordered months before by our beloved father, who was always thinking of some innocent pleasure or surprise for us ; then other books were unpacked, books all to be read aloud to us, *some* to be kept especially for the winter reading round the fire. The pleasant winter evenings we all looked forward to with so much delight, but which anticipations were never realised, for those books which we then unpacked with so much glee were *never* read ; for long ere the Christmas fire had been kindled, the sweet melodious voice which should have read

them out to us was silent in the grave, and in vain we sighed for

The touch of a vanish'd hand,  
And the sound of a voice which was still.

This happy summer day was wound up as usual by family worship headed by our dear father and joined in by our mother, the children, and all the servants of the house, and we all dispersed after spending a day so pleasantly it has always remained engraven on our memory as one of the happiest days in our lives.

The summer months passed by, and unusually bright and happy they were.

Soon after the June birthday just described I returned from Dublin, and my short visit to the crowded city and its hot, dusty streets, only gave me a keener relish than ever for our quiet shady home.

We had several visitors that summer, so we did not as usual adjourn to the seaside, and indeed our dear father was so much engrossed with the daily service, the choir, and relieving the wants of the poor, that he did not wish to leave his home for even a short time; but no idea crossed the minds of any of us, that the night was just closing in when his work on earth should be ended.

His sermons were more beautiful and spiritual

than ever, as those can testify who listened to his sermon on 'Father, glorify Thy Name,' or the sermon 'When the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore ;' which made us feel as if our risen Lord was as near to us as He was in the grey twilight of morning to His disciples when toiling on the waves of the Galilean sea, and that it was only the burden of the flesh which kept us from rejoicing in His presence, and exclaiming, 'It is the Lord !' Many who sat in the old church of Villierstown as he preached saw strange things. Even those who were not able to follow into the depths of his holy doctrines, as he unfolded the meaning of God's Word from the pulpit, and descended on the glories of His kingdom, averred that they saw a halo of glory round the preacher's head.

We little knew, however, what was coming, and like other years the summer of 1846 glided into autumn ; but this year, instead of the usual joy of harvest, a dreadful panic spread over Ireland, for a disease had blighted the potatoes, the staple food of the country. Blackness gathered over the peasant's face as he saw the green plants withering on their stalks, plainly telling him that nothing but misery and starvation was in store for his helpless family. But so it was. The never-to-be-forgotten year of the famine in Ireland had come.

## CHAPTER VII.



## CHAPTER VII.

THE FAMINE FEVER—ALL SAINTS' DAY—OUR MOTHER'S ILLNESS—OUR FATHER'S LAST SERMON—CLOSING SCENE—END.

UR dear father always led an active as well as a contemplative life ; hours were every day spent among the sick and suffering as well as in the schools, Relief Committees and clothing clubs ; but as the sad famine spread not only in Villierstown, but also over Ballynegown, Carragh Roach, and neighbouring districts, his labours were indeed sadly multiplied.

Ere long to the dearth of food a kind of low fever came with the fall of the leaf, so the distress daily increased. The poor people were very patient, for we never heard of hunger or distress reducing the peasant to an act of theft or violence. Our father's kind, loving heart was sorely tried by the sad scenes with which he came hourly in contact ; he did his best from morning till evening, but still more seemed needed to be done, so his strength was overtaxed. His calm face and bright eyes

looked to casual observers the same as ever, but still a strange expression often stole over his face, which was never seen there before.

One evening as we were all sitting round the fire roasting chesnuts, talking and laughing, although he looked as happy as any of us, we heard him murmuring to himself in a whisper,—

I hear a voice you cannot hear,  
Which says I must not stay ;  
I see a hand you cannot see  
Which beckons me away.

Another afternoon when sitting with a poor sick woman, Mrs. Holmes, he spoke much to her of that mysterious passage in the fifteenth chapter of the first epistle of Corinthians, about the baptism for the dead, and when he left the cottage as he walked down the path of the little garden he turned back and said to her, 'It is possible, Mrs. Holmes, that I may be baptised for the dead.' It was the last visit he ever paid Mrs. Holmes. The call had come, the summons had been given, but we heeded it not.

Oh ! how earnestly he laboured and toiled, and his work is not forgotten ! Even now, how those who remember his labours, as the 'Te Deum' is repeated in Villierstown Church, turn reverently with tearful eyes to his marble tablet as they say, 'The Glorious Army of Martyrs praise Thee !'

The first of November fell in 1846 on a Sunday ; it has been a day set apart by the Church ever since the earliest ages for remembering those who have fallen asleep in Jesus, the holy apostles and prophets who once watered the Church with their blood, the martyrs and confessors who were faithful unto death.

The service that Sunday was very beautiful, including the chapter from the Apocrypha on how the righteous only *seem* to die whilst their hope is full of immortality.

Then the Epistle from the seventh chapter of Revelations describing the great multitude standing before the throne clothed in white robes and with palms in their hands ; and the Gospel, telling of the inward character of that same multitude—the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, and the pure in heart.

Never did my father enter into his Maker's service with more devotion than he did that All Saints' Day ; many who saw his face beheld as though it had been the face of an angel. His text was from the eleventh of Hebrews : 'These all died in faith, not having received the promises. . . . God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect'

It was a very comforting sermon, showing how there is *no* such thing as death to the believer, what *we* call death is to him only a transition, a falling asleep in Jesus.

Many who now see that preacher's face no more can well remember the thrilling tones of his voice in the old church as he repeated again and again, '*They do not DIE*, they sleep in Jesus ; has He not said, "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die"? Yes, to those who keep His words it is fulfilled that they shall *never* taste of death.'

The sermon being ended, how little did any of us think that we were going to receive for the very last time the bread of life from his hands!—but never did the Communion Service seem more solemn than on that November morning, all feeling that not only was our blessed Lord present at His table, but that we were surrounded by the great cloud of witnesses, that a shadowy band of unseen worshippers joined us in the blessed Communion of Saints.

The eye of faith that waxes bright,  
Each moment by thine altar's light,  
Sees them e'en now ; they still abide  
In mystery kneeling by our side.

After having partaken of the heavenly food and joined in the Post-Communion prayers, we all stood up and chanted 'Glory be to God on high.' My father had no natural voice or ear for music, but that day he seemed inspired, for his voice was heard above the organ or any of the choir singing in the sweetest melody.

The sun shone brightly in on his white surplice, and his face looked transfigured with joy. It was the same, but oh ! it was strangely changed that day.

As he gave the blessing with outstretched hands, how little we knew that we beheld him standing at that altar for the last time, and that a few short days would see him buried low beneath its stone !

The week that followed All Saints' Day was a very sad one ; our dear mother was struck with the same low fever which raged around us, and for days she lay almost insensible on her sick bed.

How changed everything was now in the happy parsonage, for the useful, active mother, wife, and mistress was laid low ! There was no more pleasant reading-out in the evening, the work-basket was laid aside, the portfolio was shut up, laughter was forgotten, all was sad.

Our dear father hoped and prayed by the sick bed, for dearly he loved the wife of his youth, the mother of his children, and the faithful partner of all his griefs and joys. So the following Sunday, the eighth of November, was a very sombre one ; heavy were all our hearts as we walked to church with the leaves falling around us, reading us a mournful lesson of life.

The text that day was from St. Matthew xx. 20, on the mother of Zebedee's children coming to request that her sons might sit one on the right

hand, and the other on the left in the Kingdom and the Saviour answering, 'Ye know not what ye ask.' Then, solemnly, our father showed in his sermon how many there were who had all 'Salome's' desires and aspirations, and longed to be very near the Lord in His kingdom, but, like her, they knew not what they asked ; nor were they content to be

The first in shame and agony,  
The lowest in the meanest task.

He spoke of the cup of suffering and the baptism of blood, which all must undergo who would taste of the glory.

This can ye be ; but can ye drink  
The cup that I in tears must steep,  
Nor from the whelming waters shrink  
That o'er me roll so dark and deep ?

Earnestly he looked round on his congregation, repeating again and again, 'Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to bear the suffering ? Are ye able to bear the agony, the shame ; the loss of all your earthly hopes ? Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye indeed able to be baptised with your Saviour's baptism, and to drink of His cup ?' Those words fell sadly on our hearts, but we did not know how near was the calamity which they were sent to herald.

Our dear father came home very tired and exhausted, so after trying in vain to share our Sunday

dinner, he lay down on the bed in the 'Bees' room,' over the hall door, and slept like a weary child ; however, a little before five o'clock the sound of the church bell made him start up, dress, and go off to evening service. It was a solemn service, but towards its close everything seemed to change to triumph in the church ; the hymn that night was

*Yes ! we hope the day is nigh,  
When many nations long enslaved  
Shall break forth and sing with joy,  
Hosannah to the Son of David !*

Never can any of us forget how the hymn went out that evening. Not only did every one in the church, but angel voices seemed to cry out, 'Hosannah ! Hosannah ! Hosannah to the Son of David !'

The sermon or lecture which followed the hymn was on the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea on dry land, whilst Pharaoh and his chariots and captains were drowned in its waves ; and ere one short fortnight passed since we heard the words, the faithful preacher had safely crossed the dark sea of death, and was standing triumphantly on the shore beyond, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

The next day, Monday, we went to the morning service for the last time, and ere evening closed in he was laid low on his bed with fever.

Sad and dreary was now everything in the house : the loved, active, useful mother, so ill that she was almost unconscious, in one room, and the kind father in another, and the children of the house too young and inexperienced to comprehend the extent of the coming woe.

The doctor came daily from Cappoquin, assuring us that there was not the slightest cause for apprehension, that all was going on well, and just to trust him, for in a few days the fever would go down, but it must run its course. Our spirits were cheered by our dear mother taking a favourable turn, and by our dear father being as cheerful and playful as when he was in health ; so we thought that the doctor was right. Every day he enjoyed hearing the Psalms and Lessons for the day, a hymn from the 'Christian Year,' and a favourite book being read out to him. Our kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Hely of Rockfield, sent, almost daily, baskets of the choicest fruits from their well-stored garden and hot-house, which were always gratefully received and keenly enjoyed ; however, one evening as he seemed heavier than usual, to our surprise and amazement the doctor said that he must call in further advice. Immediately the swiftest horse was mounted, and sent galloping off to Lismore for Dr. Nugent, and another to Carrick, for another very famous and clever physician ; they both came with all possible speed ; but alas ! what horror and surprise filled our

young hearts to see their grave faces as they bent over the sick bed! Then they all retired for a consultation ; we all waited in breathless silence, but we were little prepared for the fearful sentence, which came like a thunder-bolt, crushing us to the very earth, that there was *no* hope.

Our dear mother was roused from her sick bed, wrapt up in a dressing-gown, and carried to her beloved husband's side, but he knew her no more ; his glazing eye was fixed on vacancy ; he saw not the features he loved so well, he heard not her gentle voice calling to him by every endearing epithet.

About ten o'clock at night the stupor seemed fast increasing, but towards midnight he started up and said to the nurse who was by his side, 'Mrs. Norris! we are at the very close of this dispensation, Yes! (he repeated, raising his voice) we are at the close of this dispensation. I see it written upon the windows, on the walls, and on the doors, that we *are* at the close of this dispensation.'

Yes! the sands of time were running low, and as the light of immortality began to dawn, he realised, as I trust we shall all realise some day, how true is the Saviour's promise, 'A little while, and ye shall see me ;' then he asked Mrs. Norris to read to him, and opening the Bible she read the thirty-first verse of the twenty-sixth chapter of St. Matthew : 'It is written, I will smite the shepherd,

and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.' Oh! how sadly prophetic were those words! for shortly after the shepherd was taken, and the once sheltered little flock of Villierstown has been scattered all over the world; North and South America, India, and the Colonies, can all attest this fact. He spoke but little more, but as we all partook of the Holy Communion together by his bedside, he seemed conscious, for his face lighted up several times during the blessed service, and at seven o'clock the following morning, without a struggle, without a sigh, he fell asleep in Jesus. Truly it was not death to him, it was only a transition from the storms and waves of this troublesome world to the rest which remaineth for the people of God.

Our feelings were not to be described when we saw his remains laid out on the bed in the chamber of death; for we felt that though the last enemy had done his worst, there was nothing but victory for this faithful servant of Christ; an angelic smile rested on the marble features, a holy calm rested like a diadem on the pale forehead; all was peace, peace; the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.

Ever the richest, tenderest glow  
Sets round the autumnal sun,  
But there sight fails; so none may know  
The bliss when life is won.

The beloved form was arrayed exactly as when we last saw him standing at the altar, for he was dressed in his own surplice, clean and white, the robe of the Redeemed ones, who are seen standing before the throne of God and the Lamb ; his hands were folded calmly on his breast, and though our hearts were nigh breaking as we gazed on that dearly-loved face and form, we felt that if we could we would not bring him back again, for he was gone to be with Christ, which is far better.

Some, home, once more the exulting voice arose,  
Thou art gone home, from that divine repose  
Never to roam.

Never to say farewell, to weep in vain,  
To read of change in eyes beloved again.  
Thou art gone Home.

By the bright waters now thy lot is cast,  
Joy for thee, happy one ! thy bark has pass'd  
The rough sea's foam.

Now the long yearnings of thy soul are still'd,  
Home ! home ! thy peace is won, thy heart is fill'd.  
Thou art gone Home.

Five days after the beloved remains were taken from our sight, and carried to their long resting-place. There was no pompous funeral, no hearse, carriages, or waving plumes ; the coffin, covered with its sable pall, was borne by twelve young men of the choir, and it was followed on foot by a great multitude ; many noble and rich were there, but countless seemed the number of poor from far and

near, east and west, of every persuasion and of every denomination, all anxious to pay their last sad tribute of respect to one whose name was never mentioned without love and reverence. So esteemed was he by even Roman Catholics, that they had no feelings of bigotry for one so good, and the monks of the Convent of La Trappe on the mountain had a mass for his recovery ; and when the news of his death reached Cappoquin, there was but one exclamation, 'Is that saint gone ?'

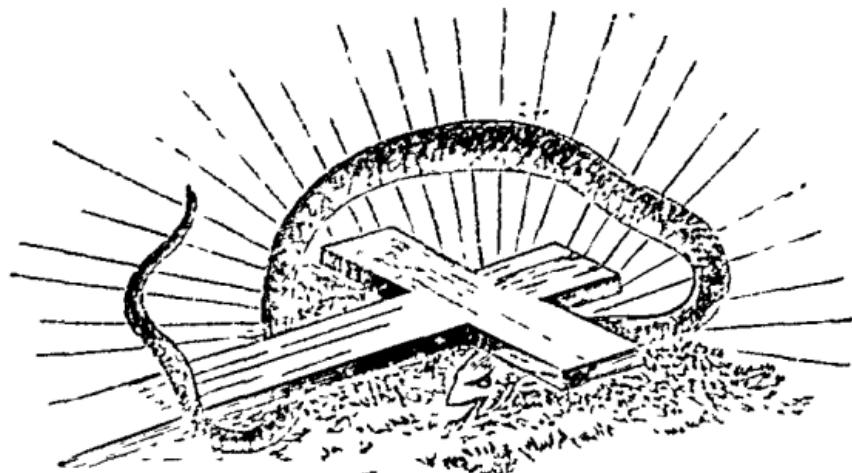
His dear and much revered friend Lord Stuart de Decies, with loving care, had a new vault built for his remains just underneath the altar where he loved to minister, and in the church which was so dear to him ; and there they calmly rest till the morning of the Resurrection, when the voice of Jesus, the Redeemer and the Life, shall be heard in the deep caverns of the grave, and the sleeping saints shall come forth incorruptible.

It was with bitter sobs that the solemn funeral service was read, and with sore weeping that the coffin was lowered into its narrow, darksome home with the solemn words, 'Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust ;' but then that weeping throng earnestly knelt and prayed that the Lord 'would soon accomplish the number of His elect, and hasten His kingdom.'

As the band of mourners left the church heavy rain descended, and as the yellow November

leaves were whirled about in the chill blast, a feeling of utter desolation filled all hearts. 'The shepherd was indeed smitten,' and very shortly the sheep of the flock were scattered abroad. We see here below but dimly ; at times all seems 'in a riddle ;' but we must trust our Father and our God, even where we cannot trace Him. The clouds and mists of this world are rapidly passing away, and although for a little while such a severe dispensation as this was may seem hard,—

Take it on trust, a little while, *soon* shalt thou know the mystery right,  
In the full sunshine of His smile.





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